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Kashmir Decks Up For Mega New Year Celebrations

Auqib Javeed

Srinagar: Thousands of tourists from the country and abroad are expected to assemble at the prominent hill stations of the Kashmir Valley, including the world famous ski-resort of Gulmarg to celebrate the New Year, despite the bone chilling cold.

Kashmir Officials told Observer that hotels in the hill stations of Gulmarg and



Pahalgam have achieved 90 percent occupancy, a week

ahead of the New Year. The bowl shaped Valley of Gulmarg

Year eve have also been planned at both Gulmarg and Pahalgam tourist resorts." is attracting more tourists be-100 percent occupancy with almost all 80 rooms in deluxe cause of its snow covered slopes

WE HAVE ORGANISED A WINTER

CARNIVAL IN GULMARG ON

DECEMBER 25. Events on New

and breathtaking landscape. and luxury categories, besides the 5 cottages booked in ad-The Khyber Himalayan Resort & SPA, has also reached vance by the travellers.

"Almost all the rooms at the Khyber Himalayan Resort & Spa have been already booked, Ranjeet Dhar, Corporate Associate Director, Marketing and PR, told Kashmir Observer. Unlike the past few years when the entire world was grappling with Coronavirus pandemic, Dhar said this year the tourist footfall was very heavy in Kashmir Valley. "As for New Year, we have planned a host | More on P10

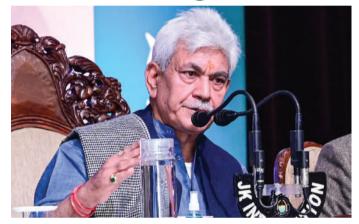
Waqf Bans **Photos, Videos At Hazratbal Shrine Press Trust Of India**

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board has issued an advisory asking visitors not to take photos or videos of the revered shrine of Hazratbal here without permission.

J-K Waqf Board chairper-son and BJP leader Darakshan Abdrabi has issued posters of the order which were put up around the shrine on Wednesday. The diktat comes | More on P10

NEW LAND LAWS

LG Defends Move, Says Some People Misleading Public



Press Trust Of India

Jammu: Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday threw his weight behind the Union Territory's new land laws, saying some people were trying to mislead the public about the changes.

The new land laws are in line with those in other parts of the country, he said. "The rule of law is in place in

the country and the rule of law will be ensured in Jammu and Kashmir as well.

"A large number of changes vere made in the land laws in Jammu and Kashmir to benefit the public as the older ones were regressive," Sinha said at a press conference here. Asked about the outrage in Kashmir over a government directive to land leaseholders to return possession More on P10

Warns Action Against 'Terror

ammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday

held in a secure and peaceful atmosphere as the backbone of

terrorism has been broken and the era of outside interference, an

He also asserted the Union Territory will witness | More on P10

'No Salaries To Those Sitting At Home'

ammu and Kashmir Lt Governor Manoj Sinha on Wednesday

of minority community employees including Kashmiri Pandits

protesting for transfer -- no salary for sitting at home. | More on P10

serving in the Valley, and sent out a "loud and clear" message to those

LG's 'Loud And Clear' Message To Protesting KP Employees

asserted all necessary measures have been taken for the safety

said the planned G20 preparatory meeting in Srinagar will be

Ecosystem' Supporters

apparent reference to Pakistan, is over.

Kashmir Shivers As 40-Day 'Chilla-i-Kalan' Begins

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar: Kashmir's harshest winter period, 'Chilla-i-Kalan', began on Wednesdav with the mercury drop-ping several notches below the freezing point in many places including Pahalgam, which recorded the lowest night temperature at minus 6.2 degrees Celsius, according to officials.

Several places in Kashmir witnessed their coldest nights of the season so far. The fringes of many water bodies, including the Dal Lake here, froze as did water in taps, the officials said. Srinagar recorded a minimum temperature of minus 4.2 degrees Celsius last

night, they said.



The famous ski rein north Kashmir's Kupwara, sort of Gulmarg in north minus 4.2 degrees Celsius in Kashmir's Baramulla dis-Qazigund and minus 2.4 detrict recorded a low of grees Celsius in Kokernag. minus 4.6 degrees Celsius. The mercury settled at a low of minus 4.4 degrees Celsius

Youth Have Left Path Of Violence, **Destruction: DGP**

Press Trust Of India



The meteorological department has forecast mostly dry weather in More on P10

Coronavirus Comeback Govt Assesses Preparedness Of Health Dept To Tackle Covid-19

Observer News Service

Srinagar: The Jammu and Kashmir administration on Wednesday reviewed health department's preparedness for early detection, isolation, testing and timely management of suspected and confirmed cases to contain outbreak of Coronavirus variants, in the wake of alert issued by the Union Ministry of Health and Family Welfare.

The review meeting was convened by Secretary, Health and Medical Education, Bhupinder Kumar here on Wednesday in which all Head of Departments of Health and Medical Education Department besides other concerned participated, an official spokesperson said.

While discussing strategies to tackle the pandemic, the Secretary, he said,

emphasized the need of ensuring a strict vigil over the situation besides keeping ready the infrastructure and requisite supplies to tackle with any such cases. Kumar, he said, also reviewed

in detail the available infrastructure, machinery and equipments including the status of testing capacity, availability of COVID essential diagnostics, COVID drugs and Oxygen Generation Plants.

"Secretary instructed the Principal Government Medical College Jammu and Government Medical College Srinagar to ensure genome sequencing machines are installed and operationalized immediately in both the Medical Colleges to perform genome sequencing of all COVID positive cases," the spokesperson said.

The Secretary, he said, also asked the Managing Director, JKMSCL, to ensure that | More on P10





State Election Commission Nirvachan Bhavan Jammu

Jammu and Kashmir

Admin, Central Govt Will Decide Who Will Stay In J&K And Who Will Not

New Laws Would Hardly

Affect 400 To 500 People

Has Been Broken

The Backbone Of Terrorism

Action Will Be Taken Against

Anyone Who's Part Of The

Ecosystem, Irrespective Of

His Field Or Profession."

In Srinagar Will Be Held

In Secure, Peaceful

Atmosphere

Coming Years

G20 Preparatory Meeting

J&K Will Witness Over Rs

70,000 Crore Investment In

Almost All KP Employees **Transferred To District** Headquarters

Singh said on Wednesday.

He said the youths of the area have shunned the path of violence and destruction

"Tral has become an abode of peace now. An atmosphere of development and prosperity has been established again here like in other areas. Tral is almost free from militancy and I want to congratulate the people for that," Director General of Police Dilbag Singh told reporters in Tral. Many of militancy's poster boys, includ-

ing Burhan Wani and Zakir Musa, hailed from Tral area.

Without naming anyone, Singh said those who took the path of militancy, never returned to their homes.

"I congratulate the youth that they have shunned the path of violence and destruction and are now treading the path of peace and prosperity. I want to tell them that this is the right path and they should not be misled by anyone to take up the wrong path because those who trod the wrong path, faced immense difficulties, and did not come back," he said. | More on P10

O R Κ S Н Α E S Т

Highway Reopens After 15 Hour Closure

ammu-Srinagar highway, the only surface link connecting Kashmir Valley with the outside world, reopened after remaining closed for over 15 hours following a major stone-slide near Dewal Bridge in Udhampur and blasting in Banihal, officials said on Wednesday. "From 20-12-2022, 1700 hours to 1700 hours on 21-12-2022, Jammu-Srinagar highway remained blocked for 12 hours 32 minutes due to stone slide near Dewal Bridge (Udhampur) and for 4 hours and 30 minutes due to blasting at Kishtwari Pather (Banihal). However, both the blockage overlapped with each other and the cumulative time remained 15 hours | More on P10

BSF Shoots Down Drone Carrying Drugs

Pakistan drone that reportedly dropped drugs into India along the International Border in Punjab was intercepted by BSF troops following which it fell on the other side, a senior officer said Wednesday. The drone was "downed" by Border Security Force (BSF) troops around 7:20 pm on Tuesday and it has been taken away by the Pakistan Rangers, he said. The incident took place near the Daoke border post in Amritsar. The drone was seen lying 20 metres inside the Pakistan territory opposite Indian border post Bharopal when the area was searched on Wednesday morning. The troops later | More on P10

Abducted Samba Girl Found In Pune

minor girl allegedly kidnapped last month from Jammu and Kashmir's Samba district was found in Pune and her abductor arrested, police said on Wednesday. The girl had gone missing on November 16. When she did not return from school, her family members launched a search for her but the girl could not be traced. Her father the lodged a complaint at Bari Brahmana police station, they said. During the investigation, it was discovered that the girl had been kidnapped by an unidentified person and a kidnapping case registered. Finally, she was recovered from Pune in Maharashtra | More on P10



Turning 18 on 1st January, 2023 or before

- > Not registered as Voter in Panchauat Electoral Roll even though you turned 18 on or before 1st January, 2023
- > If your name is missing or if you want to enrol for the first time or if you need to change/modify your details, Contact Panchayat Election Booth Official (Panchayat Secretary)

HOW TO APPLY

All forms are available with the Electoral <u>111</u> **Registration Officer (ERO) and Panchayat Election Booth Official (PEBO)**

Forms may also be downloaded from website of State Election Commission (secjk) at secjk.nic.in

Submit filled-in application forms along with necessary documents to concerned **PEBO (Panchayat Secretary)**

WHICH FORM TO BE USED



Revision of Panchayat Electoral Roll with 1st January 2023 as qualifying date

REVISION SCHEDULE

Publication of Draft Panchayat Electoral Roll in Form PER-1 21.12.2022 (Wednesday)

REGISTER

TO

Period of filling of claims and objections for addition/ deletion/corrections/transposition

21.12.2022 to 18.01.2023 (Wednesday) (Wednesday)

Special Camps at the polling Booth Location. (The Panchayat Election Booth Officials (PEBO i.e. VLW/MPW/GRS) along with the assembly BLOs; shall remain available at the polling Booth locations with the requisite Forms and Draft Electoral Roll for the guidance of the electors.

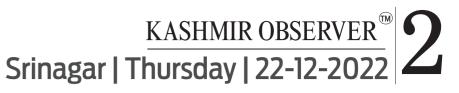


Visit Website of State Election Commission, Jammu and Kashmir for other details



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Monday - Saturday (9am - 6pm) No 5- Dal Lake Boulevard Srinagar, 190001, Kashmir



Al-Derived Digital Marker To Measure Characteristics Of Heart Disease In Patients: Study

Press Trust Of India

cientists have constructed an in silico, or computer-derived, marker for coronary artery disease (CAD) to better measure clinically important characterizations of the disease, a new study has found.

Using machine learning and clinical data from electronic health records, the researchers at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York are the first ones to map characteristics of CAD on a spectrum. Previous studies have focused only on whether or not a patient has CAD, the study said.

CAD and other common conditions exist on a spectrum of disease; each individual's mix of risk factors and disease processes determines where they fall on the spectrum. However, most such studies break this disease spectrum into rigid classes of case (patient has disease) or control (patient does not have disease). This may result in missed diagnoses, inappropriate management, and poorer clinical outcomes,

said the investigators.

The findings, published in the journal The Lancet, are expected to lead to more targeted diagnosis and better disease management of CAD, the most common type of heart disease and a leading cause of death worldwide, the study said.

The information gained from this noninvasive staging of disease could empower clinicians by more accurately assessing patient status and, therefore, inform the development of more targeted treatment plans," said Ron Do, senior study author, Icahn School of Medicine.

"Our model delineates coronary artery disease patient populations on a disease spectrum; this could provide more insights into disease progression and how those affected will respond to treatment.

"Having the ability to reveal distinct gradations of disease risk, atherosclerosis, and survival, for example, which may otherwise be missed with a conventional binary framework, is critical," said Do.

Bs

2 3 4

In the retrospective study, the researchers trained the machine learning model, named in silico score for coronary artery disease or IS-CAD, to accurately measure CAD on a spectrum using more than 80,000 electronic health records from two large health system-based biobanks, the BioMe Biobank at the Mount Sinai Health System and the UK Biobank.

According to the study, the model, which the researchers termed a "digital marker", incorporated hundreds of different clinical features from the electronic health record, including vital signs, laboratory test results, medications, symptoms, and diagnoses, and compared it to both an existing clinical score for CAD, which uses only a small number of predetermined features, and a genetic score for CAD.

The 95,935 participants included participants of African, Hispanic/Latino, Asian, and European ethnicities, as well as a large share of women. Most clinical and machine learning studies on CAD have focused on white European ethnicity, the study said.



The investigators found that the probabilities from the model accurately tracked the degree of narrowing of coronary arteries (coronary stenosis), mortality, and complications such as heart attack, the study said.

"Machine learning models like this could also benefit the health care industry at large by designing clinical trials based on appropriate patient stratification. It may also lead to more efficient data-driven individualized therapeutic strategies," said lead author Iain S. Forrest, Icahn Mount Sinai.

"Despite this progress, it is important to remember that physician and procedure-based diagnosis and management of coronary artery disease are not replaced by artificial intelligence, but rather potentially supported by IS-CAD as another powerful tool in the clinician's toolbox," said Forrest.

Next, the investigators envision conducting a prospective large-scale study to further validate the clinical utility and actionability of ISCAD, including in other populations. They also plan to assess a more portable version of the model that can be used universally across health systems, the study said.

Subject:- Grant Of Registration of the Proposed Travel unit under the name & Style "M/S Travelpix Tour And Travels Situated at Ashie Bagh Nigeen Road

Public Notice

Whereas I Ahsan Hussain S/O Ghulam Hussain Sheikh R/O Check Saderbal Hazratbal Kashmir intends to apply in the department of Tourism for Registration of my proposed Travel unit under the name and style "M/s Travelpix Tour And Travels Situated at Ashie Bagh Nigeen Road Kashmir under Tourist Trade Act 1978/82/2011-12.

Before the case is processed for registration by the competent authority the matter is hereby notified for information of general public / Financial Institutions / Bank/ Organization, Etc For Objection, If Any And The Same Should Reach To The Deputy Director Tourism registration (email: ddtreg123@gmail.com) within a period of 7 days from the date of publication of this notice. After that no objection shall be entertained. info

PUBLIC NOTICE

Death Certificate of my late husband Bilal Ahmad Rather who died on 22.2.22 has been lost somewhere . I need to get its duplicate copy. If anyone has any objection pl file the same before Police Division Mochwa Budgam.

Shameema Bano	
Bonishah , Kralpora	
Tehsil B K Pora Distt: Budgam	

SRINAGAR MUNICIPAL CORPORATION

GIST TO NIT e-Tendering No. 84 of 2022-23 Dated:- 19 /12/2022

For and on behalf of Commissioner Srinagar Municipal Corporation e- tenders are invited from Registered Dealers/Distributors/Authorized Dealers or General

	orue	ei supplier for the following				
5	3. No.	Name of the work	Total Value of The supply	Earnest Money	Date and time of Bid	Time period of

Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir. **OFFICE OF THE EXECUTIVE ENGINEER** RURAL ENGINEERING WING BARAMULLA.

E-NOTICE INVITING TENDER

NIT No: - 253/Xen/Rew/Bla/2022-2023 Dated 20/12/2022

For and on behalf of Lt. Governor, J&K UT e-tenders (In Single Cover System) are invited on percentage basis from approved and eligible Contractors Regd. With J&K State Govt. CPWD, Railways and other State/Central Governments for each of the following work:

S. No		Est. Cost (in Lacs)	Cost of T/ Doc. (In Rs.)	emd Amount	Time of completion	Class of Contractor	Major Head of Account	Position of AAA/TS
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1	C/O 4 no Community level Composit pits in panchayat Halqas Dangiwacha 2 no and Dandoosa 2 no at locations mentioned in annexure corresponding to A/A of Block Rafiabad @ Rs 88000 per Halqa under SBM Plan year 2022_23 Block Rafiabad	3.52	200	7040	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded
,	C/O 4 no Community level Composit pits in panchayat Halqas Fidarpora 2 no and Yarbugh 2 no at locations mentioned in annexure corresponding to A/A of Block Rafiabad @ Rs 88000 per Halqa under SBM Plan year 2022_23 Block Rafiabad	3.52	200	7040	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded
	C/O 4 no Community level Composit pits panchayat Halqa Sheikpora at locations mentioned in annexure corresponding to A/A of Block Rafiabad @ Rs 88000 per Halqa under SBM Plan year 2022_23 Block Rafiabad	3.52	200	7040	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded
	C/O 4 no Community level Composit pits in panchayat Halqas Soin-sadnar, Drusoo 2 no and Malganipora at locations mentioned in annexure corresponding to A/A of Block Rafiabad @ Rs 88000 per Halqa under SBM Plan year 2022 23 Block Rafiabad	3.52	200	7040	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded
	Souchpalpora 1 no at locations mentioned in annexure corresponding to A/A of Block Wailoo @ Rs 88000 per Halga under SBM Plan year 2022 23 Block Wailoo	3.52	200	7040	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded
		3.52	200	7040	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded
		4.59	200	9180	30days	DEE		AAA Accorded

1. The Bidding documents consisting of qualifying information, eligibility criteria, specifications, Drawings, bill of quantities (B.O.Q), Set of terms and conditions of contract and other details can be seen/ downloaded from the departmental website www.jktenders.gov.in as per the scheduled date given below

Date of Iss	e of Tender Notice	20-12-2022
Period of d	wnloading of bidding documents	From 20-12-2022 to 30-12-2022 up to 6:00 PM
Bid submis	sion Start date	20-12-2022
Bid Submis	sion End Date	30-12-2022 up to 6:00 PM
		Technical Bids will be opened on 31-12-2022 at 11:00 AM in the office of the Executive Engineer REW
Date and t	me of Opening of Rids (Opline)	Baramulla and Financial Bid opening will be declared online

The G.O No.238-F OF 2021 DATED:07.09.2021 issued by the Govt (Finance deptt) that the participation in the tendering process of works up to an amount of Rs 3.00 lacs is to the resident of concerned panchavat. In the event of inadequate response to a tender participation from adjoining panchavat shall be permitted.

		The		oney	Date and time of E opening	3id pe	ne riod of pply	
C N	Supplying, Fitting ommissioning of I Aotor E320 Model: 20-8 HGP-D310	Hydraulic	lacs	2%	11/01/2		10 iys	
2 S c	Supplying fitting ommissioning Pu IP Motor	<u> </u>				Da	iys	
	d e-NIT with te tenders.gov.in fro						e webs	ite
				Sd/- EXECUTIN CHANICAL GAR MUNC	DIVISI		ION	
No.SMC/F	EEM/547-51.	DIPK-NB	-5698/22	DATED 21-	-12-202	22		
	Ν	IOTICE IN		E-TEND	ER			
ed on Perc		basis from app ner State/U.T/ Cost of T/Doc	roved and e Central Gov	ligible Civil ernments f	Contra or the f	ctors regist	ered wit orks	h J&K

- If the Bidder quotes his Bid exceeding the tendering Cost, his bid will be automatically rejected.
- In case of dilemma/confusion, the rate and the unit against any item shown in Boq, the SOR rate along with its unit will be applicable.

Bids must be accompanied with cost of Tender document in shape of treasury challan/receipt under HEAD 0515 mentioning therein Name of work and NIT No. in favour of the e Engineer, REW Division Baramulla (Tender inviting Authority).

The date and time of opening of Bids shall be notified on Web Site www.iktenders.gov.in and conveyed to the bidders automatically through an e-mail message on their e-mail The bids of Responsive bidders shall be opened online on same Web Site at the office of the Executive Engineer, REW Division Baramulla.

All The Bidders has to deposit Earnest Money (2% of Advertised cost) in shape of CDR/FDR at the time of tendering as per the Circular of Finance Department.

The IST Lowest Bidder has to produce an amount equal to 3 % of allotted cost of Contract as performance security in shape of CDR/FDR/BG within 02 Days after opening of bid and shall be released after successful completion of DLP as per norms. The EMD of 2% of successful bidders shall be released after receipt of 3% performance security.

The bids for the work shall remain valid for a period of 120 days from the date of opening of technical bids.

- The earnest money/performance security shall be forfeited. If:-
- Any bidder/ tenderer withdraw his bid/ tender during the period of bid validity or makes any modifications in the terms and conditions of the bid.
- Failure of Successful bidder to furnish the required performance security within the specified time limit.
- Failure of successful bidder to execute the agreement within 28 days after fixation of contract.

Instruction to bidders regarding e-tendering process

Bidders are advised to download bid submission manual from the "Downloads" option as well as from "Bidders Manual Kit" on website www.jktenders.gov.into acquaint bid on process.

To participate in bidding process, bidders have to get 'Digital Signature Certificate (DSC)' as per Information Technology Act-2000. Bidders can get digital certificate from any vendors.

- The bidders have to submit their bids online in electronic format with digital Signature. No financial bid will be accepted in physical form.
- Bids will be opened online as per time schedule mentioned in Para-1.

Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of all necessary documents with bid. Besides, original documents related to bid be submitted physically by the bidder who is declared rediately after opening of financial bid.

Bidders must ensure to upload scanned copy of necessary documents in terms of soft copies with the technical bid & no documents in terms of hard copies shall be entertained. , in case of any clarification, the bidders shall have to produce original documents in support of soft copes if need arises.

DOCUMENTS TO BE LIPLOADED IN SOFT

copy of valid registration card along with Latest Renewal, EMD/TR as per NIT, GST, Latest clearance, PAN.

The earnest money in favour of un-successful/ non-responsive bidders shall be released only after ensuring submission of tender document fee in original, irrespective of Hard ilure of submission of tender document fee by the bidder using site shall entail him for blacklisting.

an all the documents on 100 dpi with black and white option.

The department will not be responsible for delay in online submission due to any reasons.

Scanned copy of cost of tender document in shape of treasury challan/receipt in favour of the Executive Engineer REW Division Baramulla and Earnest Money/Bid Security of CDR/FDR/BG if applicable pledged to Executive Engineer, REW Division Baramulla (Tender receiving Authority) must be uploaded with the documents of the bid. The original challan/receipt (cost of tender document), CDR/FDR/BG (earnest money/bid security) and relevant bid documents etc be submitted to the tender opening authority by the bidder clared as L1 immediately after opening of financial bid. The tender receiving authority reserves the right of opening of the tenders on due date or any other convenient available date ng any or all the tenders without assigning any reason thereof

Bidders are advised not to make any change in BOQ (Bill of Quantities) contents. In no case they should attempt to create similar BOQ manually. The BOQ downloaded should be filling the item rate inclusive of all taxes and it should be saved with the same name as it contains.

Price escalation & taxes: -The unit rates and prices shall be quoted by the bidder entirely in Indian Rupees and the rates quoted shall be deemed to include price escalation and up to completion of the work unless otherwise, specified deductions on account of taxes shall be made from the bills of the contractor on gross amount of the bill as per the rates g at the time of recovery.

- Bidders are advised to use "My Documents" area in their user on e-Tendering portal to store such documents as are required.
- In case of CRF & any other specified project the relevant guidelines/ standard bidding documents shall be followed
- Instructions to Bidder (ITB)
- All bidders shall upload the following information and documents along with qualification criteria/ qualification information with their bids
- Copies of original documents defining constitution/legal status, place of registration and principal place of business.
- Valid GST No. & Pan No. along with the latest GST Return form GST-3/GSTR-3B.
- Copy of earnest money deposit & tender document fee indicating name of work therein.
- The bidders at his own responsibility and risk should visit and examine the site of work and its surroundings before submission of bid.
- Nonattendance of pre-bid meeting will not be cause of disqualification of the bidder.
- All documents relating to the bid shall be in the English language

If the bidder does not quote rate for any item of the rate list / quantity schedule, cost of such item/ items shall be deemed to be part of the overall/ total contract value. No rates allowed for such item/ items in the allotment of contract.

All other terms conditions are as per PWD Form 25 (Double agreement Form).

-4000

5424/22 Dated: 21-12-2022

Executive Engineer. **REW Baramulla**

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KASHMIR OBSERVER[™] Srinagar | Thursday | 22-12-2022

DC Holds Public Grievance Redressal Camp At Check-Sangri

Observer News Service

Srinagar: Enduring efforts of Administration to reach out to the common masses living in the rural and far flung areas of the District to address their grievances, the Deputy Commissioner (DC) Srinagar, Mohammad Aijaz Asad Wednesday undertook an extensive tour of Check Sangri area in Khonmoh Block of the District and held a Grievance Redressal Camp under Weekly Block Diwas programme.

The tour was conducted to bring Administration at the door steps of people for on spot resolution of public issues and demands.

The Grievance Redressal Camp was attended by a large gathering of locals, besides representatives of Panchayat Raj Institutions viz. DDC member, Sarpanchs and Panchs of the area who projected their grievances and issues before the Deputy Commissioner including macadamization of Check Sangri road, infrastructure upgradation of High School Sangri, playground for local youth, separate water pumping station, deployment of Staff for Boys Middle School, waiver in electricity tariff for BPL consumers, improvement

in mobile network connectivity and other issues.

After giving patient hearing to the grievances and demands of the PRI members and other individuals, the DC sought on the spot response from the concerned District Officers present during the Grievance Redressal Camp. He assured the people of Check Sangri and other areas of Khonmoh Block that all genuine demands and issues projected by them will be looked into on priority.

The DC also gave on the spot directions to the concerned Officers for time bound redressal of the public issues

Addressing the gathering, the Deputy Commissioner said on the directions of Lieutenant Governor, the District Administration is holding such grievance redressal Camps to take appraisal of local issues from the general public for precise and on-ground assessment to ensure their time bound redressal. He said such programmes also provide feedback to the Administration to developmental plans as per proposals of the local populations for the public good and reach to the doorstep of the people instead of them visiting the DC office or other Government Offices

In A Bid To Support Local Businesses, Youth Develops Software

Agencies

Srinagar: A 20-year-old youth from Srinagar has developed Webipe - a software that provides back-end support for local businesses, start-ups, entrepreneurs and many international websites.

Hailing from Srinagar's Lal Bazar area, Fayiq Ahmad, an engineering student, has done his schooling at Green Valley Educational Institute.

Fayiq said he discovered his passion for web development at the age of 15. He used to spend his spare time learning programming languages by himself and working on small projects for local businesses.

In no time, he gained a reputation as a skilled and reliable developer, and his client base began to grow. In order to meet the increasing demand for his services, Fayig decided to turn his passion into a fulltime career and started his

own web development company. Over the next few years, his company thrived.

"I have created many websites and have provided backend support to many start-up ideas. I also helped many people to open their business by providing them with support for websites," the young software developer told KNO. "I make websites and web pages, and also provide SEO support to many locals as well as international clients.'

His clients contact him through WhatsApp, e-mail and the official website.

"It's my dream to be a topnotch developer, and for that purpose, I will work very hard and make my parents very much proud," Fayiq said. "I would like to request the youth of the valley to gain tech skills without wasting time. It will make them self-sufficient in the face of rising unemployment". (KNO)



People warm themselves on the first morning of Chillai Kalan on Wednesday. KO Photo Abid Bhat

Artisan Weaves Pashmina Carpets To Revive Dying Craft

Agencies

Srinagar: An artisan from Srinagar is trying to revive the centuries old traditional art by making Pashmina carpets. Shahnawaz Ahmad Sofi

son of Gul Mohammad Sofi, a resident of Rathpora Eidgah Srinagar is currently working on a 9×12 feet single knot Pashmina carpet to be completed in 30 months.

Shahnawaz that his family is into carpet weaving and that is how he developed keen interest to learn the art. "Despite pursuing a de-

gree in fine arts, I got job opportunities but decided to infuse some new life in this dying art by bringing new techniques and changes in it," Sofi said. "When I decided to make Pashmina carpet, everyone was apprehensive as there was no idea about its market. Initially I started with weaving wall hangings with verses from the Quran inscribed on them", Sofi added.

He said that Pashmina carpet as per historians were being made in Kashmir some 300-400 years ago but the craft vanished later.

"At present, I am working on a 9 feet x 12 feet single knot pashmina carpet and four weavers are on the job. It will take us about 30 months



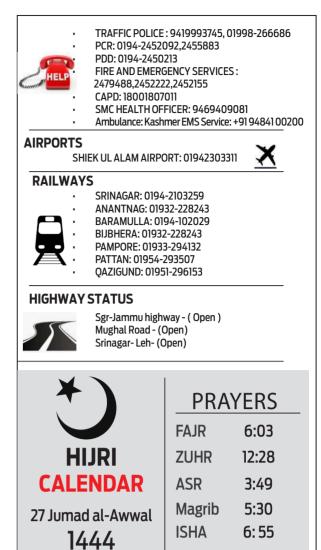
Despite pursuing a degree in fine arts, I got job opportunities but decided to infuse some new life in this dying art by bringing new techniques and

completed, it will cost around 50 lakh," he added.

He said that Pashmina carpet is a delicate work and takes time to complete with all knots of pashmina making it a luxurious piece.

"I believe that demand of any art won't go down anytime if artists will learn about market demands, designs, colours and new patterns," Sofi added. Traditional things would

not be in demand for long unless innovative changes with time are not brought, he added. (KNO)



This Day In History

- 1790 Supposedly impenetrable Turkish fortress of Izmail stormed and captured by Suvorov and his Russian armies during the Russo-Turkish War (1787-1792).
- 1807 US Congress passes Embargo Act, prohibiting American ships from trading in all foreign ports, as a result of involvement in hostilities between France and Britain.
- 1810 British frigate HMS Minotaur sinks killing 480 1814 - Samuel Marsden of the Church Missionary
- Society arrives in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand to establish the country's first mission station; Sheep, cattle, horses and poultry are introduced. 1849 - The execution of Russian writer Fyodor
- Dostoevsky is called off at the last second. 1851 - The first freight train is operated in Roorkee,
- India. 1882 - 1st string of Christmas tree lights created by
- Thomas Edison 1890 - Cornwallis Valley Railway begins operation
- between Kingsport and Kentville, Nova Scotia. 1915 - Organized baseball & Federal League sign a
- peace treaty at Cincinnati.
- 1917 Flanders declares its independence, under Pieter Tack
- 1930 Convention of Economic Rapprochement/ Oslo Agreesments signed between some European countries in response to the Great Depression.
- 1939 99 die in 2nd wreck at Friedrichshafen Germany 1940 - World War II: Himarë is captured by the Greek army
- 1941 Japans invasion leader lands on Luzon,

Waqf Board Bans **Unauthorised Photography** At Hazratbal Shrine

Press Trust Of India

Srinagar- The Jammu and Kashmir Waqf Board has issued an advisory asking visitors not to take photos or videos of the revered shrine of Hazratbal here without permission.

J-K Waqf Board chairperson and BJP leader Darakhshan Andrabi has issued posters of the order which were put up around the shrine on Wednesday. The diktat comes close on the heels of Anjuman Auqaf Jamia Masjid in the old city prohibiting men and women from sitting together in the park of the mosque.

The chairperson of the board could not be immediately contacted for a comment.

Dog Menace Continues To Haunt City Dwellers

Observer News Service

Srinagar: As authorities fail to put an end to dog menace in Srinagar, city dwellers find it hard to venture out during morning and evening when the public movement is thin. The presence of dogs on every nook and corner of the city has left people up in arms against authorities for not being able to put an end to the menace.

Over the last few years, the population of stray dogs has increased manifold in Srinagar. The unchecked rise in the dog populace has become a nuisance. People find it difficult to venture outside their homes particularly during morning and evening hours. City dwellers say that they can't venture out alone due to the fear of dogs. Although authorities say they are working hard to make the city smart, the ground reality is altogether different.

Earlier, speaking to Kashmir Observer, Dr Tawheed Ahmed Veterinary Officer, Srinagar Municipal Corporation (SMC) said Dogs are seasonal breeders and they mate twice a year. They give birth to sixteen puppies a year, most of them survive. The availability of non-vegetarian food is the main reason for their breeding. Garbage dumps on the roadsides provide them with more than enough food.

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- 1941 Tito establishes 1st Proletarian Brigade in Yugoslavia
- 1942 World War II: Adolf Hitler signs the order to develop the V-2 rocket as a weapon.
- get permission to use synthetic rubber for baseball
- 1950 2 self-propelled trains of Long Island RR collide, killing 77.
- 1956 Last British & French troops leave Egypt. 1963 Official 30-day mourning period for President John F. Kennedy ends.
- 1963 Cruise ship Lakonia burns 180 miles north of Madeira with the loss of 128 lives.
- 1964 First flight of the SR-71 (Blackbird).
- 1971 UN General Assembly ratifies former Austrian President Kurt Waldheim as Secretary- General.
- 1971 USSR performs underground nuclear test.
- 1972 6.25 earthquake strikes Managua Nicaragua, 12,000+ killed
- 1974 2nd cease-fire between IRA & British; lasts until approx April 1975.
- 1974 Referenda in Comoros-3 islands for independence, 1 stays French.
- 1974 Iraq announces plans to increase its oil production capacity.



Observer News Service

rinagar-With the new millennium a leap allay, Kashmiris still have to cling to a kangri, thanks to the' development' the place has witnessed. One Mohammad Sultan Lone of Lal Bazar; Srinagar died here last night after his kangri over-turned while he was asleep. Police believes that smoke from the smouldering bedding suffocated the man to death.

Lone, a government employee went to bed taking a kangir to warm up his bedding. He fell asleep and during the night hours the kangri over-turned, setting his bedding on fire. The smoke that accumulated in the room is being cited as the apparent cause of his death, Police Station Soura has started investigations into the matter.

The family members came to know about his death only in the morning hours when they went up to his room to enquire as to why he had not woken up. They found him dead in the burnt out bedding. He had also suffered some burn injuries

(Kashmir Observer, 22 December, 1998)

NEWS

Over 100 Rohingya Stranded At Sea Near Andamans, Many Feared Dead: Report



Agencies

MUMBAI: At least 100 ethnic Rohingya are stranded in a boat off Andaman Islands and as many as 16-20 may have have died of thirst, hunger or drowned, said two Myanmar Rohingya activist groups.

Each year many Rohingya, members of a Muslim minority, risk their lives boarding rickety vessels to escape violence in Myanmar and squalor in Bangladesh refugee camps. Many attempt to reach Malaysia.

The stranded boat was approached by five Indian ships late on Tuesday, a source told news agency Reuters.

A spokesperson for the Indian Navy said he did not have any details to share. A spokesperson for the Coast Guard did not respond to a request for comment from Reuters. 'We estimate that prob-

ably as many as 20 have died,



Rohingya Working Group. "We hope that the Indian Navy or Coastguard will manage to rescue and disembark the boat as soon as possible. These people have been adrift on a damaged boat for more than 2 weeks without food and water. We have heard that up to 16 people may have already died.

Follow COVID Protocols Or Suspend Bharat Jodo Yatra: Health Minister To Rahul



the march.

in Rajasthan.

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Citing concerns raised by three BJP MPs over spread of coronavirus, Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya has urged Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to consider suspending the Bharat Jodo Yatra if adherence to Covid protocols cannot be followed.

In a letter addressed to Gandhi and Rajasthan Chief Minister Ashok Gehlot on Tuesday. Mandaviya said three MPs from Rajasthan -- P P Chaudhary, Nihal Chand and Devji Patel -- have flagged concerns and requested him that Covid protocols, including use of masks and sanitisers, be strictly followed during the march and only those who are vaccinated be allowed to participate.

Afghan Women Stopped From Entering Universities After Taliban Ban

Agencies

KABUL: Hundreds of young women were stopped by armed guards on Wednesday from entering Afghan university campuses, a day after the nation's Taliban rulers banned them from higher education in another assault on human rights.

Despite promising a softer rule when they seized power last year, the hardline Islamists have ratcheted up restrictions on all aspects of women's lives, ignoring international outrage. A team of AFP journalists saw groups of students gathered outside universities in the capital, Kabul, barred from entering by armed guards and shuttered gates. Many, dressed in hijabs, were

also seen standing in groups on roads leading to the campuses. "We are doomed. We have lost everything," said one

student, who asked not to be identified. Men students also expressed shock at the latest edict. "It really expresses their

illiteracy and low knowledge of Islam and human rights," said one, also asking not to be named.

"If the situation continues like this the future will be worse. Everyone is scared."

Most private and government universities are closed for a few weeks over winter. although campuses generally remain open to students and staff. The decision to bar women from universities came late Tuesday in a terse announcement from Neda Mohammad Nadeem, the Minister for Higher Education.

"You all are informed to immediately implement the mentioned order of suspending education of females until further notice," it said. Washington condemned

the decision "in the strongest terms.'

"The Taliban cannot expect to be a legitimate member of the international community until they respect the rights of all in Afghanistan. This decision

Jordan Hosts Leaders From Across West Asia For French-Organized Summit

Agencies

enior officials from Iran, Saudi Arabia, Iraq, Qa-tar, Kuwait, Egypt, and the EU launched the second Baghdad Conference for Cooperation and Partnership in the Jordanian capital Amman on 20 December.

Organized by France and Iraq, the summit stated aim is to "provide a forum for discussing the region's problems." Ahead of the conference's start, Iranian Foreign Minister Hossein Amir-Abdollahian and nuclear negotiator Ali Bagheri Kani held a meeting with EU foreign policy chief Josep Borrell and nuclear talks



For his part, the Iranian foreign minister condemned western countries for supporting "rioters" and imposing illegal unilateral sanctions against Iran under the pretext of protecting human rights.

Âmir-Abdollahian also no official word on whether voiced readiness to resolve any Amir-Abdollahian will meet with Saudi Foreign Minister misunderstanding in direct ne gotiations with Ukraine, and Faisal bin Farhan Al-Saud. Since 2021, Iraq has hosted called on the remaining JCPOA five meetings between Saudi signatories to avoid politicizing the talks further and to adopt a and Iranian officials, the last of "constructive and realistic apwhich was in April, but these contacts have not yielded any proach to make necessary decisions for an agreement." breakthroughs in relations. Talks to restore the 2015 Another notable leader atnuclear deal have been at a tending the summit is French President Emmanuel Macron, stalemate since September, when anti-government prowho analysts believe is ustests took hold in Iran. At the ing the opportunity to keep a strong presence in West Asia, time, western nations accused the Islamic Republic of raising where western influence con-"unreasonable demands" in tinues to wane.



'Troubling New Development Is...': Sonia Gandhi Hits Out **At Government**

Press Trust of India

NEW DELHI: Congress leader Sonia Gandhi today hit out at the government for not allowing a discussion on the India-China border issue in Parliament, saying silence on matters of serious concern has become its defining feature.

Addressing party MPs at the general body meeting of the Congress Parliamentary Party in the central hall of Parliament, she said when facing a significant national challenge, it has been the tradition in our country to bring Parliament into confidence.

A debate can shed light on several critical questions, she said.

"Why is China emboldened to continually attack us? What preparations have been made to repel these attacks, and what more needs to be done? What is the Government's policy to deter China from future incursions? Given that we continue to have a severe trade deficit with China, importing far more than we export, why is there no economic response to China's military hostility? What is the government's diplomatic outreach to the global community?" she asked.

clashed along the Line of Actual Control (LAC) in Tawang sector of Arunachal Pradesh on December 9 and the face-off resulted in "minor injuries to a few personnel from both sides", according to the Indian Army.

Noting that a frank discussion strengthens the nation's response, Mrs Gandhi said it is the duty of the government of the day to inform the public and explain its policies and actions.

This refusal to allow a parliamentary debate on such a matter of grave national concern - shows disrespect for our democracy, and reflects poorly on the Government's intentions. It demonstrates its inability to bring the nation together. On the contrary, by following divisive policies, by spreading hatred and targeting some sections of our society, the government makes it harder for the country to stand up as one against foreign threats," she said.

"Such divisions weaken us and make us more vulnerable. At times like this it must be the government's endeavour and responsibility to unite our people, not divide them as it has been doing these past several years," Sonia Gandhi said at the meeting.

Twitter Secretly Boosted Us Psyops In Middle East, **Report Says**

Agencies

Indian and Chinese troops

witter worked with the Pentagon to amplify propaganda about the United States military's activities in the Middle East, al- lowing fake accounts to push pro-US narratives despite pledging to shut down covert state-run influence campaigns, according to an investigation based on Twitter's internal files. Twitter

sages", according to the investigation, which was published on Twitter and in The Intercept. CENTCOM's "priority accounts" promoted information in support of US military nar-

ratives, includcriticism of Iran, support for the US and Saudi Arabiabacked war in Yemen, and claims about the superior accuracy of US drone strikes, according to Fang. NTCOM subsequently

relation to a UN investigation into Iranian nuclear sites.

In the days leading up to the summit, reports spoke about a new possible meeting between Iranian and Saudi officials. However, there has been

will come with consequences

for the Taliban," Secretary of

State Antony Blinken said in a

UN Secretary-General Anto-

nio Guterres, meanwhile, was

"deeply alarmed", his spokes-

"The secretary-general reit-

erates that the denial of edu-

cation not only violates the

equal rights of women and

girls, but will have a devastat-

ing impact on the country's

future," Stephane Dujarric

The ban on higher education

comes less than three months

after thousands of girls and

women were allowed to sit

for university entrance exams

across the country, with many

aspiring to choose teaching and

medicine as future careers.

statement.

man said Tuesday.

said in a statement.

The yatra has entered Haryana on Wednesday from Rajasthan.

The MPs have also requested the Union minister to ensure that participants are isolated cerns around public health The three MPs, in their letter

on December 20, mentioned how the risk of Covid spread has "increased" as people from other states are coming to Rajasthan to take part in the march and claimed that symptoms have shown up in many of them after the participation.

The minister urged Gandhi

and Gehlot to take prompt ac-

tion keeping in view the re-

quests made by the three MPs

Referring to the letter signed by the three MPs, Mandaviya said

they have sought suspension of

the yatra in national interest if ad-

herence to Covid protocols cannot

be ensured keeping in view con-

The MPs also highlighted how Himachal Pradesh Chief Minister Sukhvinder Singh Sukhu tested positive for coronavirus infection after going back following participation in the event.

discuss the dormant process to revive the Iran nuclear deal. Following the meeting, Borrell said in a tweet that he urged the Iranian diplomats to "immediately halt military support for Russia and internal repression."

coordinator Enrique Mora to

"Stressed need to immediately stop military support to Russia and internal repression in Iran. Agreed we must keep communication open and restore JCPOA on basis of Vienna negotiations," the EU official said.

created a special "whitelist" exempting accounts run by US Central Command (CENT-COM) from spam and abuse flags, granting them greater visibility on the platform, according to the investigation by Lee Fang, a reporter with The

Intercept. Twitter quietly introduced the feature in 2017 after US military officials asked the company to improve the visibility of 52 Arab language accounts used to "amplify certain mescealed its ownership of the accounts, Fang said, in some cases using fake profile pictures and bios to give the impression they were run by civilians in the Middle East.

While Twitter has said it does not allow deceptive statebacked influence operations, the social media company was aware of CENTCOM's covert activity and tolerated the presence of the accounts on the platform until at least May 2022, Fang said.

NEWS MAKERS

Will Resign As CEO As Soon As I Find 'Someone Foolish Enough To Take The Job': Twitter Owner Elon Musk

Press Trust of India

NEW YORK: Twitter's new owner billionaire Elon Musk said he will resign as the social media company's chief executive as soon as he finds "someone foolish enough to take the job," two days after users voted for him to quit in a poll he ran online. The 51-year-old billionaire promised earlier to abide by the result of a Twitter poll which saw 57.5 per cent of users vote "yes" to him quitting the role.

"I will resign as CEO as soon as I find someone foolish enough to take the job. After that. I will just run the software and servers teams," Musk tweeted on Tuesday. Musk added the tweet to his earlier post on Sunday in which he had asked in an online poll if he should step down as head of Twitter.

"I will abide by the results of this poll," he had said.

Over 17 million votes were cast in the poll that began on



Sunday evening and ended early on Monday morning with most respondents voting in the affirmative, CNN reported.

Musk had not immediately reacted to the outcome of the vote and declared two days after the poll that he will resign as soon as he finds someone foolish enough to take the job. He had tweeted on Sunday: "Should I step down as head of Twitter? I will abide by the

results of this poll". "As the saying goes, be careful what you wish, as you might get it," Musk added in a later tweet.

A total of 57.5 per cent voted

"yes" after Musk asked his 122 million followers whether he should stand down

In the past, Musk has obeyed Twitter polls. He's fond of quoting the phrase "vox populi, vox dei", a Latin phrase that roughly means "the voice of the people is the voice of God".

Since buying Twitter for USD 44 billion and taking over as the CEO in late October, Musk, who also runs Tesla and SpaceX, has journeyed from one controversy to the next.

Musk also announced on Twitter that major policy changes would be voted on moving forward. The poll comes as Twitter says it will shut down accounts solely designed to promote other social media platforms.

The measure would also affect accounts that link off to or contain usernames from platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, Mastodon, Truth Social, Tribel, Nostr and Post, the company said in a tweet.

ASI Gets Water, Property Tax Notices For Taj Mahal Press Trust of India

The Archaeological Survey of India has been asked to pay a water tax of nearly Rs 2 crore and a property tax of about Rs 1.5 lakh for the Taj Mahal, along with a Rs 5-crore service tax for the Agra Fort, in an apparent first-ofits-kind action by local authorities.

The ASI in Agra said the monuments are exempted from such taxes, but Municipal Commissioner Nikhil Tikaram Funde said notices have been issued to several buildings and those eligible will be given the relief.

The Agra Municipal Corporation's notices ask the ASI to pay a water tax of Rs 1.94 crore and a property of Rs 1.47 lakh for the Taj Mahal, and Rs 1.40 lakh as property tax for another monument, the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah.

The notices were issued for the financial years 2021-22 and 2022-23, and the ASI has been asked to pay up within the next 15 days.

In-addition, the Agra Cantonment Board has sent out a notice to the ASI to recover a service tax of Rs 5 crore for the Agra Fort, an official said.

Agra Circle ASI official protested the action by the municipality.

"The Taj Mahal, tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah and the Agra Fort are national



monuments that are exempted from such taxes," said ASI's Agra Circle Superintending Archeologist Rajkumar Patel. He said the ASI takes care of about

4,000 monuments in the country and has not made any such payment before. "It is the first time in my knowledge, and as per records, that the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) has received notices of Water Tax from the Jal Kal

Vibhag part of Agra Municipal Corporation (AMC) and Property Tax from the Agra Municipal Corporation for the national monuments Taj Mahal and the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah.'

'We received a water tax notice of Rs 1.94 crore for the premises of Taj Mahal and nearby areas that are not mentioned clearly, but it is mainly for the Taj Mahal premises. Property tax of Rs 1.47 lakhs for the East Gate of Taj Mahal and Rs 1.40 lakh for the tomb of Itmad-ud-Daulah for property tax have been issued.'

Civil Service Aspirants Hold Protest In Delhi For **Extra Attempt, Detained**

Agencies

NEW DELHI: Delhi Police, in the early hours of Wednesday, detained students who were protesting in the Old Rajinder Nagar area demanding an extra attempt to clear the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) exam.

Earlier, the protesting students said that they lost out on previous attempts to clear the exam, as the Covid-19 pandemic hampered their preparations.

A protestor, who introduced herself as Garima, told ANI out that SSC (GD) and Agniveer aspirants were provided extra attempts to clear the exams, considering the pandemic.

'If the government can allow extra attempts to SSC (GD) and Agniveer aspirants, why can't it make a similar provision for us? We are protesting peacefully," she said.

Another protestor, Rashi, demanded two extra attempts and a relaxation of two years in the age limit.

"We want a relaxation of two years and two extra attempts. Didn't Covid affect the UPSC aspirants? If the government can try to lift MSME and waive off loans, why can't it provide some relaxation to us? It's not just corpses, but also our dreams, that were burnt to ashes during the pandemic," she said.

STATE

Police To Conduct Verification Of Migrants, **Pony Operators In Katra**

sure

DAP's Core Agenda Is

Development: Azad

Press Trust Of India

JAMMU: Jammu and Kashmir Police will conduct verification of migrants, pony operators and others in and around Katra, the base camp for the pilgrims visiting Vaishno Devi shrine, to keep a check on suspicious elements,

officials said on Wednesday. have Police been directed to conduct joint security drill with central para military forces and

other intelligence agencies for security of the shrine, they said.

The directions were given by Deputy Inspector General (DIG) Udhampur-Reasi range Mohd Suleman Choudhary during a security review meeting of Mata Vaishno Devi shrine at Katra on Wednesday.

Several Prominent

Citizens, Youth Join

Observer News Service

JAMMU: Ghulam Nabi Azad,

the Democratic Azad Party

Chief & Former Chief Minister

on Wednesday said that his

party has development as its

core agenda that is inclusive

While meeting with various

delegations in Jammu Mr Azad

said that DAP is a political plat-

form that envisages a develop-

ment of the UT while taking all

sections of society on board.

"We are pro people and want

development of the region that benefits its people," he told the

delegations. On the occasion

various prominent faces from

Doda district, Marh & other

areas from Jammu Province

joined the party and took re-

solve to reach out the masses

and inform them about DAP's

political agenda. Mr Azad also

met the youth delegation who

joined the party on the occa-

sion. He said India is a country

with majority of its youth pop-

ulation. "No political party can

afford to ignore this majority

population and grow. DAP has

DAP In Jammu.

and pro people.

The senior officer stressed upon verification and census of migrants in and around Katra, pony porters and others to check the entry of any suspicious element in the area.

He further directed to conduct regular checking of hotels and other accommodations and verification of identity of those staying there.

Choudhary reviewed the security drill of the shrine, yatra route, and steps taken to ensafety of pilgrims visiting the shrine.

A huge rush of pilgrims is likely to visit the shrine in the coming days especially on New Year's Eve on December 31. Therefore, the officials should cooperate and coordinate with each other to avoid any untoward incident, he directed.

Gadkari, LG Reviews Progress Of National Highway Projects In J&K

Observer News Service

NEW DELHI: Union Minister for Road Transport & Highways, Nitin Gadkari and Lieutenant Governor, Manoj Sinha held a review of the ongoing National Highways projects in Jammu and Kashmir on Wednesday.

Union Minister of State, General (Retd.) V.K. Singh; Union Minister of State, Jitendra Singh, and Central & UT officials were also present in the meeting, an official spokesperson said.

After a detailed discussion, he said, the meeting finalized the design for the upcoming Inter Modal Station, Katra. It will improve the travelling experience of pilgrims visiting Shri Mata Vaishno Devi shrine and provide better infrastructure and mobility to the citizens.

The spokesperson said that the meeting also reviewed the ongoing National Highways Authority of India (NHAI) & National Highways and Infrastructure Development Corporation Ltd. (NHIDCL) projects in J&K UT and steps have been



taken to resolve various issues related to projects.

ensure uninterrupted connec-

tivity to the locals, the meeting

sures to keep Sonamarg open

deliberated upon the mea-

for the public in winters.

eras on its highways.

tion of the ongoing works to Keeping in view the tourensure smooth and hassle-free ist influx at prominent tourist pilgrimage. The Lt Governor said J&K adplaces like Sonamarg during the winter season, and also to

ministration is giving utmost priority to infrastructure development in the Union Territory and various steps are being taken for timely completion of ongoing projects.

were passed for the comple-

Giving special impetus to "The priority of a self-reliant surveillance and monitoring of Jammu Kashmir is modern infrastructure and modern convehicular movement, NHAI & NHIDCL will install CCTV camnectivity. Our prime objective is to create facilities for people NHIDCL's works related to to ensure sustained economic Shri Amarnathji Yatra were growth and social upliftment," also reviewed and directions the Lt Governor said

Pole Orders Strict Action Against Drug Traffickers Under NCORD

For Counseling Of Mental & Drugs Victims Becoming Popular In Valley'

Observer News Service

Commissioner (Div Com) Kashmir, Pandurang K Pole Wednesday while reviewing progress under Nasha Mukt Bharat Abhiyan said that SU-KOON Helpline 1800-180-7202 for Mental & Drugs victims counseling is becoming

Room, HoDs and officers of



treatment of substance addicts. culation and publication of success stories of rehabilitated Addressing the meeting, Div Com directed DCs for strict action drug victims. against cultivators of illicit crops He directed for participation in TV programmes by doctors, and take strict action against drug

traffickers under NCORD. For rehabilitation and treatment of drug addicts, he asked for enhancing performance of Addiction Treatment Facility (ATF) centers in districts.

Besides, he asked for the sharing of information about ATFs among the people and directed for quantitative analysis of their functioning

Meanwhile, Div Com sought

compliance of the circular is-

sued by his office in which PRIs,

VLWs, Patwaris and Anganwar-

di workers were asked to report

information of suspected sub-

Pole exhorted on wide cir-

stance users in their areas.



SCERT's 2-Day Workshop On FLS-NAS Aimed At Designing **Interventions Ends**

Farooq Shah

SRINAGAR: A two-day workshop organised by the Educational Research and Survey Assessment (ERSA) wing of the State Council of Educational Research and Training (SCERT) on Foundational Learning Study (FLS-NAS) report aimed at designing interventions based on the findings of the NCERT's Foundational Literacy and Numeracy (FLN) survey concluded at its regional office

here at Bemina on Tuesday. A total of 1008 students of Grade-3 from 112 schools across all the 20 districts of Jammu and Kashmir had participated in the three-day nationwide survey on 23-26 March this year.

The objective of the survey, as per a statement from the Ministry of Education, was to conduct a large-scale assessment of the foundational learning of grade 3 students to establish a baseline for the National Initiative for Proficiency in Reading with Understanding and Numeracy (NIPUN) Bharat mission.

The survey helped in establishing reading proficiency benchmarks for fluency with comprehension for each of the languages being assessed under the study and provided the data for sustainable devel-opment goals (SDG 4.1.1.), covering aspects of foundational literacy and numeracy.

The survey's results were documented, and the deficiencies that were identified were forwarded to the states and UTs so that they may take appropriate corrective action.

The SCERT's expert team, comprising Dr Nazneen, G H Reshi, Basharat Ahmad and Riyaz Ahmad Dar, held thorough sessions explaining the findings of the survey to about two dozen resource persons drawn from all 10 districts of the valley, helping them design the interventions needed to address these deficiencies, with the aid of digital presentations, survey literature distribution, and by

inviting experts from outside

Dr. Haresh Chaudhari, who is the Curriculum Coordinator, Reach To Teach, at the Gujarat Council of Educational Research and Training (GCERT), said the first-of-its-kind survey provided a benchmark for language fluency.

"The extent to which someone can speak smoothly and effectively determines the fluency as 'degree of proficiency' in a language," Dr Chaudhari said. "Earlier, such benchmarking was not available and now we know what kind of yardstick should be applied to gauge the proficiency of the language in young children."

The remedial measures, Dr Chudhari, said should focus on creating content that aids in the comprehension without confusing a child.

"Assessing oral fluency can provide information about a child's reading level but is not a sufficient measurement of reading comprehension," he said.

State Coordinator Samagra Shikhsha, J&K, Ajeet Sharma, while highlighting the importance of acquiring comprehension skills from a young age, said language fluency is based on comprehension abilities, which are essential for your child's success.

"Every subject a child studies includes them, and they are essential for his or her academic success," he said. "A child must possess strong comprehension abilities to succeed on statemandated standardised tests."

"The report cards offer analysis that shows the pupils' individual and comprehensive reading and numeracy learning levels," academic officer and FLN's divisional coordinator, G H said. "The inference will be utilised to create classroom interventions that will be implemented throughout all districts' schools."

The participants, Reshi said, were familiarised with the methods for studying the report and the significance of making it available to all the UT officials at the zone and district levels including teachers



Azad further said that to strengthen the secular values in Jammu, its youth share the major responsibility. "Jammu is a city with rich socio-cultural values. It accepts and welcome people from all communities, religion and cultures due to which its economy is growing. Our youth have a responsibility to strengthen this spirit and our party workers will lead from the front," he said. He told the delegations whenever the elections in Jammu Kashmir are held, our workers will have to lead from the front for a change and ensure DAP is winning with thumping majority to form the government to protect the jobs and land rights for locals. He said no fight can be fought and won if it is not led by youth. "Our youth have a major role in social and economic transformation and India's future is relying on its



'SUKOON Helpline

SRINAGAR: The Divisional

popular in Valley. The meeting was attended by Deputy Commissioners, Director School Education, Director Health Services of Kashmir. Director ULB, Deputy Commissioner Excise Department, AD. Information Department, Incharge Divisional Control

various departments including

RDD, Colleges, Drug Control &

The meeting deliberated

over the actions to ensure

eradication of illicit crop pro-

duction, clamp down on drug

traffickers and counseling and

Wakf Board.

decided to have representation of youth since it is our future he told the youth delegation.

youth unlike other countries he said

Two USG Centres Sealed In Anantnag

Wednesday sealed two USG centres in Seer Hamdan area of South Kashmir's Anantnag district.

An official said that action was taken on the directions of Deputy Commissioner Anantnag after a video had gone viral on social media.

He said that a day before a patient had visited one among two centres for USG where doctors reported that the patient has appendix, however, on operating nothing was found.

The official said that soon after the incident attendants protested and their protesting video in which they were demanding strict action against the centre went viral.

He said that on Wednesday

ANANTNAG: Authorities on a team from the CMO office along with BMO concerned raided two USG centres and sealed them.

BMO Mattan Dr Mohammad Ashraf told a local news agency KNO that two centres were sealed as the qualifications of the doctors present at centres wasn't matching the required qualifications as per PCPNDT act. He said that one doctor posted in Pulwama was seen in one centre and his details have been shared with higher ups

for necessary action. He said that at other centre, there was a Sonologist, however, he wasn't a government and all details have been shared with administration fir necessary action.

Sinthan Pass Open To Tourists On First Day Of Chilai Kalan



Observer News Service

ANANTNAG: In a first, Sinthan Pass has been kept open for tourists as well as locals on the

moting winter tourism in Kokernag and providing motorable conditions to the peo-

ment, Deputy Commissioner (DC) Anantnag Dr Basharat Qayoom said that promotion of winter tourism is a priority area and steps like these are aimed at inviting tourists to explore beautiful destinations at such times in the year when

He said that winter tourism

festivals are also planned in all three important tourist destinations of Pahalgam, Kokernag and Verinag and preparation for these are underway.

SDM Kokernag, Er Sarib Sahran said that in Kokernag several such tourist friendly initiatives are being held throughout the year. He said that focus on promoting tourist activities in high altitude areas like Margan and Sinthan top has pushed them to take proactive measures like these.

He said that in collaboration with the Tourism Department steps are underway to create hospitality facilities in both

these areas. He added that the road also helps maintain connectivity of Jammu and Kashmir divisions when NH44 is blocked due to adverse weather.

It is in place to mention that Sinthan Top is a mountain pass, a popular tourist destination located between South Kashmir's Breng Valley (Sub-District Kokernag) in Anantnag district and Chatroo in Kishtwar district of Chenab Valley. Historically, the route to Sin-

than remains closed for most of winter, however, this year, due to continuous efforts by Revenue and NHIDCL the road has been kept open in November and December.

Further, Div Com stressed on running the IEC campaign on drug de-addiction, SUKOON Helpline, ATFs, symptoms of substance use etc in Education In Rajouri institutions, Health institutions and besides on main-

> JAMMU: Three men were injured, two of them critical, when a wild bear attacked them in Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said. The incident took place in far

flung Kotcharwal village. Two of the injured have been

critical condition, they said. As per locals of the area, the victims were in their fields when a wild bear appeared from nearby bushes and attacked them.

The injured have been identified as Mohd Munshi (55), Butreferred to Government Medi- tu (35) and Abdul Rashid (30) cal College (GMC) at Jammu in - all resident of Kotcharwal.

Govt Forms Panel On Waste Management In J&K

Agencies

SRINAGAR: The Government on Wednesday ordered the constitution of a Committee for Centralized Single Window mechanism for planning, capacity building and monitoring of waste management in Jammu and Kashmir.

Headed by Financial Commissioner (Additional Chief Secretary) Agriculture Production Department, as Chairman , the six-member committee comprises of Administrative Secretary, Jal Shakti Depart-ment , Administrative Secretary, Housing & Urban Development Department, Administrative Secretary, Industries & Commerce Department, Administrative Secretary, Department of Forest, Ecology and Environment and Administrative Secretary, Department of Rural Development and Pan-

chavati Rai. According to a government order, the terms of reference for the committee among others include "to bridge the gaps in solid & liquid waste generation and treatment, shortening the proposed timelines, and adopting alternative and interim measures."

Besides it is to formulate and execute restoration plans for all districts, cities, towns and villages in a time bound manner and also formulate the District Environment Plans through the concerned agencies with authentic and updated database for policy making and execution of projects.

It has been also tasked with to review the Sewage treatment facilities adopted in terms of septic tanks/soakage/ pit/FSTP in all the ULBs of UT of J&K in light of extant guidelines of MoHUA, GoI.

The committee's reference also includes to formulate a policy for prevention of untreated discharge of sewage into water bodies and recycling used water for agricultural and industrial purposes

The Committee has been allowed co-opts many member(s) from any government Department/ Government Organization and invite expert(s) in the field, to participate in its deliberations.

Courts From Jan 2 Agencies as well as all Courts located in SRINAGAR: The High Court of

I&K and Ladakh on Wednesday announced winter vacations for 15 days in subordinate courts in Kashmir Valley, some districts of Jammu as well as Ladakh from January 2.

Winter Vacation In

"It is notified for the information of all concerned that the Subordinate Courts in Kashmir Province and the Courts located in District Kishtwar; District Dada; and Courts located at Batote, Gaol, Banihal and Ukhral in District Ramban and Bani in District Kathua of Jammu Division in the Union Territory of Jammu & Kashmir

the Union Territory of Ladakh shall observe 15 days winter vacations with effect from 02-01-2023 to 16-01-2023 (both days inclusive)," reads a notification issued by Sanjeev Gupta, Registrar Judicial.

"The Principal District and Sessions Judges and Chief Judicial Magistrates of the concerned Districts shall make the suitable arrangements for disposal of urgent criminal business arising during the period of such vacations in the areas within their respective jurisdictions," the notification, a copy of which lies with NS, added. (GNS)

first day of Chilai Kalan. The move is aimed at pro-

ple of far-off areas.

Speaking about the develop-

they are usually inaccessible.

professors and other experts to

share their advice, knowledge

and suggestions on the polic-

es of Nasha Mukt Bharat and

was asked to loop in the ser-

vices of Molvies, Khateebs and

Imams in eradication of drug

consumption and educating the

people about the drug menace

stream and social media.

Moreover, Wakf Department

drug de-addiction.

3 Injured In Bear Attack

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KASHMIR OBSERVER

Thursday| 22-12-2022

Fresh Covid Alert

ew variants of the Omicron strain have fuelled a massive surge in Covid infections in China. The nation, which gave up its zero Covid strategy early this, reported seven deaths in the last two days due to the virus., Chinese cities are currently hit by the highly transmissible Omicron strains. Other countries which are witnessing largescale outbreaks of Coronavirus are Japan, United States of America, Republic of Korea, and Brazil. Globally. Around 35 lakh fresh cases are reported weekly. The situation, however, is more serious in China where crematoriums are struggling to deal with an influx of bodies.

This has also alarmed India forcing the Centre on Tuesday to urge all states and union territories to increase genome sequencing of Covid-positive samples to enable the timely detection of newer variants if circulating in the country. The union government has called for early detection, isolation, testing, and timely management of suspected and confirmed cases to detect and contain outbreaks of new SARS-CoV-2 variants. It has unveiled a five-fold strategy of test-track-treat-vaccination and adherence to Covidappropriate behaviour to restrict the transmission of the coronavirus.

Since the outbreak in China is likely to lead to further mutations, and given the size of China's economy, the United States has warned the rest of the world should be concerned about it. And there is an urgent need for the world and the individual countries to get serious about the challenge. However, India has a reason to be happy about the fresh Covid numbers: The country recorded 112 new Covid cases on December 20 and active cases fell to 3,490, according to Health Ministry data. This shows that the pandemic is on its way out in the country. But the example of China has come as a warning that the virus is very much among us. And if we continue to ignore observing the SOP,, the pandemic could once again blow up in our face, just like it did in January-February 2021, killing thousands of people.

The continuously mutating sub-variants of the Omicron virus could in time trigger yet another wave. So people have to continue to take care. It is too soon to abandon the masks or give up the use of sanitizers. The SOP remains as relevant as it did when the pandemic broke out in early 2020. Meanwhile, we can celebrate our triumph on the Covid pandemic with the least number of Covid cases and fatalities to date. In Kashmir too, the drastic reduction in Covid cases is a cause for celebration. It is also a boon for tourism which has witnessed a bumper year so far with over one crore people visiting the union territory. But at the same time, we can't afford to let our guard down.

For now, Congress can take heart from the victory in Himachal It can put some wind in its sails as it prepares for the Assembly elections next year. The party currently rules in Chhattisgarh, Himachal and Rajasthan. It remains to be seen whether the party retains Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan. Its performance in Karntaka and Madhya Pradesh will be also keenly watched

RIYAZ WANI

sembly elections in Gujarat and Himachal Pradesh and that of the MCD polls in Delhi has been a mixed bag: The BJP expectedly won Gujarat with a landslide majority, Congress surprisingly triumphed in Himachal and the AAP in Delhi. The scale of the BJP's victory in Gujarat, securing 153 out of 180, has overshadowed those of the Congress and the AAP. The BJP even won the seat at Morbi where the bridge collapse in the run up to the polling day killed over 140 people. This has, once again, underlined for one and all the extent of entrenchment of the saffron party in the state, and for that matter, in many other parts of the country. And this makes the result of the 2024 general elections almost a foregone conclusion. The BJP could end up achieving a bigger win than it did in 2019.

he outcome of the As-

However, the outcome of the ten Assembly polls scheduled to be held before the 2024 general elections will be equally important. Among them the elections Karnataka, Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh, Rajasthan and Telengana will be very crucial. The BJP will hope to win all of them. But should the party suffer reverses in the majority of these states, this may not bode well for its 2024 chances. The elections in these five major states represents the last chance for the opposition to hurtle back into the reckoning. It appears, however, very unlikely that the BJP may not do well in the upcoming Assembly polls. Despite being in power for over eight years, the party remains untouched by anti-incumbency. So much so, that the governance issues seem to hardly matter as Morbi episode yet again demonstrates. The overarching political persona of the prime minister Narendra Modi

seems to trump everything.. Either the Congress or the combined opposition are hardly in a position to mount a credible challenge to the BJP. Or so it seems.

Bihar chief minister Nitish Kumar's attempt to unite opposition has so far met with a very little success. In the current climate, all parties want to go their own way. Congress has so drastically shrunk in recent years that it is struggling to retain its position as a national party. The AAP is trying hard to step into the breach. And it has achieved some significant success in this. The party already rules Delhi and Punjab and has made some inroads in Gujarat, qualifying it as a new national party.

But along the way, the AAP has become too ideologicallyaligned with the BJP to be a seamless successor to the Congress. And this makes it more a threat to the BJP than the Congress in the long term. That is, if the AAP casts itself more in the BJP's image. As of now, the AAP is showing a tendency to remain ideologically-ambivas it prepares for the Assembly elections next year. The party currently rules in Chhattisgarh, Himachal and Rajasthan. It remains to be seen whether the party retains Chhattisgarh, and Rajasthan. Its performance in Karntaka and Madhya Pradesh will be also keenly watched.

Together, the outcome of the Assembly polls will be a bellwether for 2024. In case the BJP suffers major reverses in the states, it could apparently face an uphill climb in the national election. But not necessarily. In the run up to the 2019 election, Congress had put up a stiff resistance to the BJP. In 2017 Assembly polls in Gujarat, the party secured 77 seats and subsequently won elections in Chhattisgarh, Madhya Pradesh and Rajasthan in 2018. As a result, the saffron party didn't appear to be a favourite to win the general election. Most optimistic prediction was that the BJP would return with a reduced tally, forcing it to stitch together a coalition government, a throwback to the one run by the PM Modi's predecessor Atal



Feature image caption: Students create a 'rangoli' to spread voting awareness ahead of upcoming Gujarat Assembly elections, in Ahmedabad on November 17, 2022. | Photo Credit: PTI

Gujarat Takeaway

Despite being in power for over eight years, the BJP remains untouched by anti-incumbency

OTHER OPINON

Elon Musk, Get Off The Soap Box

onsidering that this is the man who kicked off one of the more tumultuous chapters in the history of Twitter with a poll — "Free speech is essential to a functioning democracy. Do you believe Twitter rigorously adheres to this principle? (March 25, 2022)" — Elon Musk's turn to vox populi on the question of his role at the social media company was only surprising for one reason. Few expected him to risk a "yes" verdict. "Should I step down as head of Twitter? I will abide by the results of the poll," the billionaire tweeted on December 18. When the poll closed, 57.5 per cent of the 17.5 million votes were in favour of "yes".

If one of the defining characteristics of the internet age is user-generated content, then Musk's chaotic leadership of Twitter has been, as they say on the internet, "peak Web 2.0". In the weeks since he got behind the wheel of the company on October 27, Musk has veered from one controversy to the another --- mass layoffs, reinstating Donald Trump's account, launch of paid verification, followed by its rollback — generating enough content to keep the commentariat busy for months to come. Almost all of this has played out in public, on Twitter, frequently fueled by Musk's own tweets.

It is possible that the polls — whether to bring back Trump and other users who were "deplatformed" before his takeover or whether to restore the suspended accounts of journalists who had allegedly violated Twitter policies — are meant to turn the platform he owns into the public square he claims it is. If that is indeed the case, it might help for Musk to loosen his very firm grip on the megaphone and get off the soapbox. As it stands now, whether he remains CEO or not, Twitter seems to be turning into a one-man show.

Indian Express

alent, veering towards either right or left according to its electoral convenience.

Though the Congress has also indulged in soft Hindutva, the drift of its politics has been by and large secular. But it is also true that in recent years the party has become apologetic about secularism, lest it be seen as Muslim appeasement in the country. With Rahul Gandhi's padyatra, however, this may be changing. Congress has finally shown some assertiveness about pursuing an inclusive political agenda. Based on the public response to the yatra so far, the message seems to have had some impact, albeit its electoral implications are still uncertain For now, Congress can take heart from the victory in Himachal It can put some wind in its sails Bihari Vajpayee.

But then the Pulwama attack on February 14, 2019 changed everything. The military strike on Balakot that followed soon after and the consequent dog-fight hurtled the BJP back to the centre stage. The party swept to victory in the general election. So, going by the history of the past eight years, the reverses for the BJP don't mean the party won't come back stronger. As Yogi Berra famously said, it isn't over until it is over. The saying snugly fits the politics of the BJP phenomenon in present India.

Views expressed in the article are the author's own and do not necessarily represent the editorial stance of Kashmir Observer The author is the Politics Editor at Kashmir Observer



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The Needy Dying

f late, making my way to the mosque, I chanced upon a woman; begging her heart out. Many men snuck past her. And no one bothered to take a look at her. It was as if she was a ghost; waiting there to haunt the people. She lay there; her eyes flitting here and there in hopes of finding a person who could give her a few bucks. But the people acted deaf, dumb, and blind. The scene was so pathetic that it would make your skin crawl.

Yet another tragic incident, a few days back, when a girl took her own life by diving into a river, and the reason again revolved around financial problems. Everyone living in different corners of the world does help the needy. But, when it comes to us, we avert our gaze from one. Even this cold season seems to have no significant impact on our minds as to under what conditions the needy would be living their lives. We have become out-and-out beasts.

That lady and now no-longer-alive girl aside for a moment, there are so many amputees, divorcees, orphans walking down the street, visiting our homes, mosques; but we almost never direct our gaze at them, or hang on their stories, or provide them with something adequate enough to bring smile to their faces

We hardly ever make them feel lovable. We rarely are kind enough to them.

Anyways, the question again

arises; to where do they go when our blasted presence has dominated this piece of the planet wholly? Do we want them to break down in tears and invoke the Almighty to curse us or take them?!

If such incidents fail to shake our conscience and make us take concrete steps towards saving the destitute from dying, we are hardly human beings.

Peer Faizan Bashir

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NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY ON Ramanujan And His CMATCHINE EMATTERS 6 (9)

Firdous Ahmad Mala

THE national mathematics day has been celebrated every year since its inception a decade ago in 2012. It is now in double figures. The day is celebrated to pay homage to one of the finest, yet, arguably, the most "unrefined" Indian mathematician, Srinivasa Ramanujan, the one who is now popularly known as the man who knew infinity owing to the movie with the same title that made its first appearance half a dozen years back in 2015.

Ramanujan was born in 1887 at Erode in Madras and had the strongest and the strangest liking, which could be termed as obsession, for numbers and mathematics. The saga of how he made it to being elected as a Fellow of the Royal Society is inspiring, on one hand, and enervating, on the other. He was unrefined, unpolished and far from being properly educated. Yet he was one of his kind, unbelievable and far from the prosaic stuff.

Ramanujan's collaboration with G. H. Hardy left a lasting influence on both. When Ramanujan died at the age of thirty three, Hardy said something that appears indicative of Hardy's dissatisfaction and displeasure at being departed from Ramanujan. He said, "No mathematician should ever allow him to forget that mathematics, more than any other art or science, is a young man's game. Galois died at twenty-one, Abel at twenty-seven, Ramanujan at thirty-three, Riemann at forty. There have been men who have done great work later; [but] I do not know of a single instance of a major mathematical advance initiated by a man past fifty. A mathematician may still be competent enough at sixty, but it is useless to expect him to have original ideas." It was nothing less than a vent to the frustration Hardy experienced at the untimely demise of Ramanujan.

Ramanujan's early marriage, his lack of being well-versed with the formal education and his being butterfingered when it came to proofs could have only added to his woes, however, none of these became a deterrent to his untiring pursuit for mathematics, thanks to Hardy. His work on elliptic functions and partitions brought to light his

intuition he possessed. If there was one thing that Ramanujan had ir

acumen and

the kind of

NOW THAT WE ARE CELEBRATING THE NATIONAL MATHEMATICS DAY, WE MUST NOT CONFINE IT TO MERE CELEBRATIONS and commemoration. Schools, colleges

and universities need to inculcate in the students the kind of love Ramanujan had for mathematics. It would be no exaggeration to declare that knowledge of mathematics is an indicator of how progressed and advanced a society is.

abundance when there was a paucity of the same in others, it was his intuition.

Ramanujan's notebooks are another wonder. In his book, 'The Discovery of Ramanujan's Lost Notebook', Georg Andrews wrote that he was already an advanced researcher in fields, such as mock theta functions and hypergeometric series. Ramanujan stood much ahead of his time.

Having mastered S. L. Loney's famous book on trigonometry at the age of thirteen was a feat that speaks for itself. This book alongside the book titled, A Synopsis of Elementary Results in Pure and Applied Mathematics culminated and resulted in

giving a meaningful and impactful impetus to Ramanujan's

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about the latter's remark on 1729 being a number with not very interesting properties is indicative of how closely and deeply he was in love with numbers and mathematics. He is reported to have remarked that 1729 is the smallest number capable of being written as the sum of two cubes in two different ways. There is a lot more to know about this pure mathematician, Ramanujan. 'The man who knew infinity, the book and the movie, besides Hardy's masterpiece, 'A mathematician's apology' are some of the sources to know more about Ramanujan.

words. His famous response to Hardy

KASHMIR OBSERVER

SRINAGAR | THURSDAY | 22.12.2022

The revolutionary, inspiring and somewhat mysterious life of Ramanujan came to a close when he was merely 33 in 1921.

Now that we are celebrating the national mathematics day, we must not confine it to mere celebrations and commemoration. Schools, colleges and universities need to inculcate in the students the kind of love Ramanujan had for mathematics. It would be no exaggeration to declare that knowledge of mathematics is an indicator of how progressed and advanced a society is. Ramanujan has left us a very rich legacy, the legacy of originality and that of unconditional love for research and discoveries. The legacy is to be capitalized upon and continued. An evident and prominent lesson we can derive from Ramanujan's story is that of singleness of purpose.

> The author is an Assistant professor Government Degree College Sopore

Why Is Astronomy A Science But Astrology Is Not?

Talia Dan-Cohen, Carl Craver

Are you sure astrology isn't a science?

Both astrology and astronomy are in the business of making predictions. The theories of astrology claim that the positions of the planets and the stars influence who you are and what happens to you: your job, your personality and your romantic partner. Astrologers make these predictions based on the positions of the planets at the time of your birth.

Astronomy, in contrast, makes predictions about such phenomena as the movements of planets and the expansion of galaxies. Astronomers explain their predictions with such properties as masses, distances and gravitational forces.

As a philosopher and an anthropologist who study what science means to society, we think it is important to separate the question of whether something is a science from the question of whether it is true or false.

Astrology makes scientific claims

Science, in essence, involves making and testing factual claims about the world. Factual claims are true or false descriptions of the world (Joe is 1 meter tall) as opposed to descriptions of how we define things (1 meter is 1,000 milimeters). In this sense, astrologers, like astronomers, make factual claims about the world. To us, that makes astrology sound

a lot like a set of scientific beliefs.

For a very long time, until the 17th or 18th century, astronomy and astrology were practiced side by side. After all, knowing where the planets were relative to the stars was necessary to make accurate predictions about how their locations influenced human affairs. That's why astronomers and astrologers populated medical schools and governments, advising people on what the heavens signaled was to come on Earth. Even famed astronomers Galileo and Kepler practiced astrology. Any rule that says they are scientists only if they make one set of factual claims but not when they make another set of factual claims divides these thinkers into two halves that aren't meant to be contradictory. In both cases, they wanted to know how things worked so they could predict how things would go in the future.

Being false vs. being unscientific

But here's the rub: When researchers test the predictions astrology makes about people's lives, those predictions turn out to be no better than guesswork. There is currently no broadly accepted evidence that galactic forces are capable of influencing the choices people make. The truck parked on the street exerts more gravitational pull on you than Mars does, and the radio waves from your local station far outpower those from Jupiter, for instance.

There is an important difference between being

false and being unscientific. Currently, astrological theories are false precisely because they make scientific claims about the world, and those claims turn out to be wrong. Although the predictions astrology makes are false, they are nonetheless a matter of science. That's how we know they are wrong, after all.

Some people believe they find support for astrological predictions in their own personal experience. They read their horoscope and it seems just right: They did "meet someone interesting" or "benefit from listening to a close friend's advice." But the predictions are vague enough that they would often be true even if astrology were utterly bogus. That's why it can be difficult to figure out how to assess an astrologer's predictions with precision.

Theories of astronomy, on the other hand, have evolved over the years with advances in technology. They are routinely corrected in response to increasingly precise measurements. For example, Einstein's theory of general relativity got a boost over Newton's because it predicted the precise migration of Mercury's closest point to the Sun year after year. If astrology had the same ability to make correct predictions with such precision, it might still be a major focus of scientific attention.

Why is astrology still popular?

But then why do so many people find astrology so useful if its predictions are not well founded? Why are astrological signs and horoscopes so popular?

It seems that looking to the sky to make some sense of what's going on right now and what's going to happen in the future has appealed to a lot of different people at different times in history all over the world.

When it comes to what's commonly known as Western astrology, many people find their astrological sign to be a source of meaning in their lives. In fact, nearly 30% of Americans believe in astrology. It's one of many tools we have for telling stories about ourselves to make sense of who we are, why we are that way and why experiences that otherwise would feel meaningless and confusing seem to happen to us all the time. In this sense, astrology's success might be less about prediction and more about what it offers in terms of meaning and interpretation.

Among other things, astrology can be a useful prompt for self-reflection. It asks us whether we have traits typical of our astrological sign, and whether those we love have traits the theory suggests they ought to have. Thinking about our traits and relationships with the people around us is generally a good tool for understanding who we are, what we want to be and the meaning of our lives. Perhaps astrology is helpful in this way, independently of whether those traits are fixed by the stars.

By arrangements with The Conversation

LIFE & TIMES

Study Reveals Why Humans Get Infected With Rodent-Borne Diseases

ANI

n a global study, researchers have identified that most reservoirs of rodent-borne diseases tend to live exclusively or occasionally in or near human dwellings, show large fluctuations in their numbers.

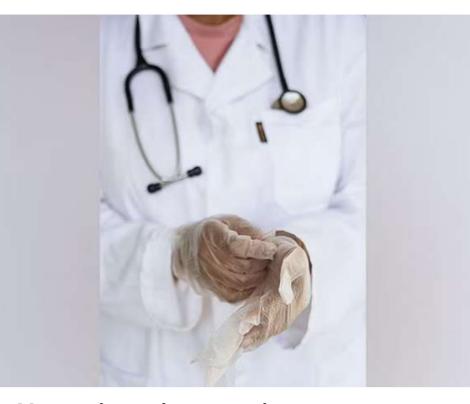
The COVID-19 pandemic has stressed the need to better understand the transmission routes of animal-spread diseases. The study demonstrates how the risk of pathogen transmission from animals to humans is driven by the interplay between natural and human-caused factors.

Rodents' "fast life" with sexual maturity at early age, many litters per year and numerous young per litter is an important explanation why rodents are important reservoirs for pathogens. But why do humans get infected by rodentborne pathogens?

"Most rodents that spread zoonotic pathogens, meaning pathogens spreading between animals and humans, show large population fluctuations, move at least occasionally indoors, or are hunted for meat or fur. Our results were consistent among pathogen types i.e., virus, bacteria, fungi, and parasites. And with transmission modes, i.e., intermediate, involvement of vectors or non-close and close contact, with close contact including inhalation of contaminated aerosols," says Frauke Ecke, project leader and Professor at University of Helsinki, Finland and senior lecturer at Swedish University of Agricultural Sciences (SLU).

Global study on 436 rodent species

In the study published in Nature Communications, researchers from SLU, University of Helsinki and Cary Institute of Ecosystem Studies, USA, performed a global quantitative study based on data collected from research papers and databases. The study includes 436 rodent species of which 282 are all known reservoirs of zoonotic pathogens. The researchers studied the linkage among the rodents' choice of environment, variation in numbers i.e., population fluctuations, hu-



Most rodents that spread zoonotic pathogens, meaning pathogens spreading between animals and humans, show large population fluctuations, move at least occasionally indoors, or are hunted for meat or fur

mans' hunting of rodents, and the status of rodents as reservoirs.

"It is remarkable how consistent the results are among continents, disease systems and rodent species," says Rick Ostfeld, co-leader of the study.

Some areas of the world are riskier to get zoonoses from rodents

In addition, the researchers have identified regions wherrodent-borne diseasese transmission risk between rodents and humans is high. Large parts of Europe, especially central and northern Europe, a wide stretch extending from eastern Europe to eastern Asia, eastern China, parts of South America, south-east Australia, and eastern regions in North America are at high risk.

"If people encounter a rodent in

these regions, there is a high risk that this rodent carries zoonotic pathogens," savs Ecke.

Examples of such pathogen carrying rodents include the bank vole in Europe, the North American deer mouse, and Azara's Grass Mouse in South America. These species show large population fluctuations and can also move indoors.

"It is especially the large population fluctuations together with the disturbance of the rodents' natural habitat that can explain why rodents move nearby and into human dwellings. This movement behaviour is typical for so-called generalists, which are species that can cope with many different environments. These generalists are the most important reservoirs of pathogens," explains Ecke.

Flying Snakes Help Scientists Design New Robots

ANI

Robots have been designed to move in ways that mimic animal movements, such as walking and swimming. Scientists are now considering how to design robots that mimic the gliding motion exhibited by flying snakes.

In Physics of Fluids, by AIP Publishing, researchers from the University of Virginia and Virginia Tech explored the lift production mechanism of flying snakes, which undulate side-to-side as they move from the tops of trees to the ground to escape predators or move around quickly and efficiently. The undulation allows snakes to glide for long distances, as much as 25 meters from a 15-meter tower.

To understand how the undulations provide lift, the investigators developed a computational model derived from data obtained through high-speed video of flying snakes. A key component of this model is the cross-sectional shape of the snake's

its body, the snake undulates side to side, producing a low-pressure region above its back and a highpressure region beneath its belly. This lifts the snake and allows it to glide through the air.

"The snake's horizontal undulation creates a series of major vortex structures, including leading edge vortices, LEV, and trailing edge vortices, TEV," said author Haibo Dong of the University of Virginia. "The formation and development of the LEV on the dorsal, or back, surface of the snake body plays an important role in producing lift.'

The LEVs form near the head and move back along the body. The investigators found that the LEVs hold for longer intervals at the curves in the snake's body before being shed. These curves form during the undulation and are key to understanding the lift mechanism.

The group considered several features, such as the angle of attack that the snake forms with the



body, which resembles an elongated frisbee or flying disc.

The cross-sectional shape is essential for understanding how the snake can glide so far. In a frisbee, the spinning disc creates increased air pressure below the disc and suction on its top, lifting the disc into the air. To help create the same type of pressure differential across

oncoming airflow and the frequency of its undulations, to determine which were important in producing glide. In their natural setting, flying snakes typically undulate at a frequency between 1-2 times per second. Surprisingly, the researchers found that more rapid undulation decreases aerodynamic performance.

Researchers Ascertain Why Breast Cancer Survives Chemotherapy

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Press Trust Of India

Researchers have found the reason why residual breast cancer survives chemotherapy and does not respond to immunotherapies, according to a study.

The researchers from the Tulane University in the United States have discovered for the first time how breast cancer persists after chemo and why immunotherapies designed to clear out the remaining tumour cells by revving up the immune system are not effective on such cancer.

Most forms of breast cancer are highly treatable, especially when detected early. But the last frontier cases remain the deadliest and the hardest to treat. Last frontier cases refer to those forms of cancer that cannot be treated with hormone or targeted therapies and that do not respond to chemotherapy.

According to the study, the process of surviving chemotherapy triggers a programme of immune checkpoints or regulators of the immune system. These checkpoints protect the breast cancer cells from being attacked by the immune system.

The process, thereby, creates a "whack-a-mole" problem for immunotherapy drugs called checkpoint inhibitors that may kill tumour cells expressing one checkpoint but not others that have multiple checkpoints, according to the study published in the Nature Cancer journal.

"Breast cancer does not respond well to immune checkpoint inhibitors, but it has never really been understood why," said corresponding author James Jackson of the Tulane University.



"We found that they avoid immune clearance by expressing a complex, redundant programme of checkpoint genes and immune modulatory genes.

"The tumour completely changes after chemotherapy treatment into this thing that is essentially built to block the immune system," Jackson said.

The researchers studied the process in mouse and human breast tumours and identified 16 immune checkpoint genes that encode proteins designed to inactivate the cancer-killing T-cells, the study said.

"We are among the first to actually study the tumour that survives post chemotherapy, which is called the residual disease, to see what kind of immunotherapy targets are expressed," said the study's first author, Ashkan Shahbandi.

The tumours that respond the worst to chemotherapy enter a state of dormancy called cellular senescence, instead of dying after treatment.

According to the researchers, they found two major populations of senescent tumour cells, each expressing different immune checkpoints activated by specific signalling pathways. They showed that the expression of immune evasion programmes in tumour cells required both chemotherapy to induce a senescent state and signals from non-tumour cells.

The scientists then tested a combination of drugs aimed at these different immune checkpoints. While the response could be improved, these strategies failed to fully eradicate the majority of tumours, the study said.

"Our findings reveal the challenge of eliminating residual disease populated by senescent cells that activate complex immune inhibitory programmes. "Breast cancer patients will need rational, personalised strategies that target the specific checkpoints induced by the chemotherapy treatment," Jackson said.

M/s U.S. Constructions Prop. Sameer Jan, S/o. Gh. Mohd Sofi, R/o. Soura, Srinagar. No. MW/ 18/8915-19/td Date: 19-12-2022

Subject: - Establishment of New Art Gallery at Stone Building Old Secretariat Srinagar.

1. This Office allotment No:-MW/2406-07/TD dated 20-11- 2021. Ref:-2. ADTs (S) Notice No:-MW/463/ADT dated 27-10-2022 and MW/547-49/ADT dated 07-12-2022

FINAL NOTICE

Whereas, the above named work has been allotted to you and the work have to completed by you within the 60 days prescribed time period as per terms and conditions of the e-NIT.

Whereas, the work was supposed to be completed within stipulated time period, despite lapse of more than prescribed time period and have accordingly been issued a notice by the Asstt. Director Tourism, M&W, Srinagar reffered above with the directions to resume the said work without any execuse or any furher delay but you failed to resume the work till date.

Now, therefore, in view of abnormal delay in the completion of the work, final notice is hereby served upon you to resume the work within 3 days time as notified to you by the Asstt. Director Tourism. M&W Sriagar in above mentioned notice from the date of issuance of this final notice, failing which it shall be presumed that you are not interested in execution of the said work and the same shall be put to fresh tenders at your risk and cost and your contract shall be foreclose without any further notice besides the CDR deposited by you shall be forefieted, moreover you will be also debarred not to participate in the tendering process of Tourism Department for 02 years.

DIPK-15354/22 DATED: 20-12-2022

Dv Director Tourism M&W Srinagar

GOVERNMENT OF JAMMU & KASHMIR Office Of The Floriculture Officer Anantnag (Department Of Floriculture)

Tel. Fax: - 01932-294114 Email: - anantnagflori@gmal.com

AUCTION - NOTICE

The Floriculture Officer Anantnag invites bidders to take part in the open auction of wood lying at Club Park Pahalgam to be conducted on 26-12-2022 at 11:30AM at Wazir Bagh Anantnag. Therefore the interested bidders are requested to check the same personally well before the date of auction and accordingly take part in the open Auction.

Terms and condition:

- The starting bid for the said wood is Rs:10000/=.
- 2. All the bidders have to deposit the HMD amount of Rs:-1000/- well before the conduction of auction. 3.
 - The successful bidder has to deposit the final bid amount in cash on the spot.

During lifting of the auctioned wood, if there is any kind of damage to any person or property, the successful bidder will be personally responsible for that.

5. The successful bidder has to lift the auctioned wood within weeks' time positively from the said Park and follow all the codal formalities.

6. Auction committee has frill powers to accept or reject the auction without assigning any reason thereof. 7. Rest of the terms/conditions will be communicated on the spot of Auction.

No: FOA/FD/2226-32 DIPK-15419/22 Dated: 20/12/2022

(Sadagat Ah) Floriculture Officer Department of Floriculture Anantnag

BUSINESS

Crypto Could Cause Next Financial Crisis: RBI Gov

MUMBAI: India's central bank governor warned Wednesday that cryptocurrency markets risked causing the next global financial crisis, saying the re-cent collapse of FTX was proof of the sector's "inherent risks".y

The comments close out a challenging year for India's millions of crypto owners, who are already reeling from a global market collapse and steep domestic taxes.

"Unlike any other product, our main concern about crypto is that it doesn't have any underlying (value) whatsoever," Reserve Bank of India governor Shaktikanta Das said at an industry event.

"Our view is that it should be prohibited because ... if you try to regulate it and allow it to grow, please mark my words: the next financial crisis will come from private cryptocurrencies."

Cryptocurrencies have been under the scrutiny of Indian regulators since first entering the local market nearly a decade ago, with a rise in fraudulent transactions leading to a central bank ban in 2018.

India's Supreme Court lifted the restrictions two years later and the market surged, backed by burgeoning local trading platforms and glitzy celebrity endorsements.

But the introduction of a 30 percent tax on profits from "private currencies" trading this year has resulted in trading volumes shrinking to a tenth of their previous size.

A sharp fall in the prices of leading tokens like bitcoin --



dubbed a "crypto winter" -- has wiped out more than \$2 trillion from their global market value since its peak of \$3 trillion in November 2021, further spooking traders.

The sudden collapse of FTX -- a cryptocurrency exchange worth \$32 billion before it filed for bankruptcy last month --and US fraud charges against its one-time billionaire founder Sam Bankman-Fried has intensified scrutiny of the sector.

Das said the fall in crypto prices and recent developments around FTX validated his long-held view that cryptocurrencies have "huge inherent risks for our macroeconomic and financial stability".

The Reserve Bank of India this year introduced its own digital rupee based on blockchain technology, intended to bring down the costs of commercial transactions as the Indian economy becomes less reliant on paper currency.

Last month, India's Prime Minister Narendra Modi called for increased regulation of private currencies to stamp out terror funding.

Modi also said last year that bitcoin presented a risk to younger generations and could "spoil our youth" if it ended up "in the wrong hands".

Govt Keeping Close Eye On Inflation; Targeted Approach Averted Recession: FM

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman on Wednesday said the government is keeping a close watch on inflation to ensure there is no surge in prices, and highlighted the targeted approach in pulling out the economy from pandemic disruptions without slipping into recession.

She also expressed confidence that the fiscal deficit will not breach the target because of enough revenue buoyancy to take care of additional expenditure of Rs 3.25 lakh crore in 2022-23. The minister was replying in

Rajya Sabha to a discussion on first batch of Supplementary Demands for Grants for 2022-23. The supplementary demand for grants was later returned to Lok Sabha, thus authorising the government to spend an additional Rs 3.25 lakh crore over and above the funds approved in the Union Budget.

Sitharaman said the supplementary demands for grants is essentially for meeting expenditure towards food security and fertiliser subsidy, and providing support to the Indian economy. While participating in the

debate, former finance minister and Congress veteran P Chidambaram wanted to know from the government how it plans to fund the additional spending.



"In September itself, government made it clear that we aren't changing our borrowing schedule and borrowing plans... There's enough revenue buoyancy which gives me confidence that we will fund this supplementary demands without breaching fiscal deficit target," Sitharaman said.

The government borrows from the market to bridge the gap between expenditure and revenue. In the Union Budget 2022-23, the government had announced to keep the fiscal deficit at 6.4 per cent of the GDP.

Sitharaman, who is scheduled to present the next Union Budget on February 1, said, "because of the targeted approach in which the government decided to give relief during Covid and address concerns given as inputs from various stakeholders, it has kept India on safe course of revival and also not getting into recession". Further, she said that some

large economies are facing recession because of the approach they had adopted to deal with challenges of the pandemic.

"Borrow and spend and even print money to reboot the economy was the suggestion by a former finance minister and others during Covid. As we close 2022, we should look at the negative effect of use of this suggestion by other countries, which have gone into recession," she said.

Referring to the price situation in the country, she said, we are keeping a good eye on inflation like considerations" which are purely extraneous nowadays, because of the fuel and fertiliser crisis in the international market.

On remarks made by Raghav Chadha during the debate on Tuesday, the minister said the AAP member, who is a qualified accountant, "should look into numbers before he speaks".

"He said inflation is high and in double-digit. He should notice that WPI inflation is at 21-month low of 5.85 per cent. Wholesale food inflation is at 2.17 per cent," the minister said. In response to several members saying that there is a lack of private sector investments in recent years, Sitharaman said that private sector capex is happening because of the favourable policies of the government like PLI schemes.

'JKRLM Encouraging **Entrepreneurship** Culture Among Women Across J&K'



Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: J&K Government has established an encouraging and conducive environment for promoting women entrepreneurship culture across the Union Territory through Jammu and Kashmir Rural Livelihoods Mission (JKRLM).

Jammu and Kashmir has made remarkable progress under RLM by providing training as well as financial support to various SHGs and made them self-sufficient.

JKRLM's mandate is to reach out to 66 per cent of the rural population across the 125 blocks of Jammu and Kashmir. The core values which guide all the activities under JKSRLM are inclusion of the poorest and substantial role of the poorest in all the processes, transparency and accountability of all processes and institutions, proprietorship and key role of the poor and their institutions in all the stages - planning, implementation and monitoring and lastly community self-reliance and self-dependence.

Mission (NRLM), implemented by the Union Ministry of Rural Development, is focusing on promoting self-employment and organisation of rural people, especially the poor. The project aims to reduce poverty in the Union Territory by building strong grassroot institutions for the poor, engaging them in gainful livelihood interventions and ensuring appreciable improvement in their income on a sustainable basis. This programme also aims to

enable the poor to think positively about themselves and their family, and reap all benefits of government schemes, which ultimately helps them live a life of contentment, happiness, and dignity.

In Jammu and Kashmir, a number of projects are running under JKRLM, of which Mahila Kisan Sashaktikaran Pariyojana (MKSP) and Start-Up Village Entrepreneurship Programme are making remarkable progress. MKSP is a sub-component of Deendayal Antyodaya Yojana-NRLM and aims to empower women in agriculture.

National Rural Livelihoods

Dulloo Chairs Maiden Meet Of TWG's Constituted For **Framing Of CEPP**



Observer News Service

JAMMU: Additional Chief Secretary, Agriculture Production Department (APD), Atal Dulloo Wednesday chaired the maiden meeting of Technical Working Groups (TWG's) constituted recently by the Government for framing of 'Comprehensive Ex- various other means for proport Promotion Policy (CEPP)

through video conferencing. During the meeting, detailed deliberations were held on developing a suitable policy regime for promotion of agricultural commodities from J&K as well as increasing the share of agricultural exports.

The meeting also discussed motion of agriculture sector

281 Cases Taken Up For **Investigation by ED Regarding Suspected FDI Norm Violations**

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI- About 281 cases have been taken up for investigation by the Directorate of Enforcement regarding suspected violations of foreign direct investment (FDI) norms all over the country during April 2019 to March this year, Parliament was informed on Wednesday.

Necessary action as per provisions of Foreign Exchange Management Act, 1999 (FEMA) has been taken, which includes issuance of show cause notices, adjudication and imposition of penalty, Minister of State for Commerce and Industry Som Parkash said in tion, the processing of an apa written reply to the Lok Sabha. In these cases, following the due process of adjudication, penalties of more than Rs 2,600 crore have been imposed under the FEMA, he said, adding the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has done compounding of contraventions of FDI related FEMA provisions in total of 1,421 cases across the country during the last three years. "During the period from April 01, 2019 to March 31, 2022, around 281 cases have been taken up for investigation by the Directorate of Enforcement (ED) under the provisions of the Foreign Exchange Manage-



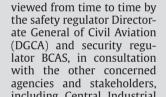
ment Act, 1999 regarding suspected violations of FDI norms all over the country including Rajasthan," Parkash said.

In a separate reply, an application for registration of geographical indication (GI) in the name of 'Hyderabad Lac Bangles' was filed on June 23.

"Being a quasi-judicial funcplication is done as provisions of the Geographical Indications of Goods (Registration and Protection) Act, 1999 and relevant rules in this regard," the minister said. A GI tag confers legal protection against its unauthorised use. Registration of GI also allows the authorised user exclusive right to the use of GI in relation to goods in respect of which is registered. Replying to a question on startups, he said Rs 7,528 crore has been committed to 93 alternative investment funds (AIFs) under FFS (Fund of Funds for Startups) as on November 30.

check in process at airports. Specific details about the recommendation could not be immediately ascertained.

In recent weeks, there have been complaints about congestion and long waiting hours at various airports, es- including Central Industrial





Soon, No Need To Take Out **Electronic Devices From Hand**

Baggage For Scanning At Airports

Press Trust Of India

NEW DELHI: Aviation security watchdog BCAS has recommended installation of scanners based on computer tomography technology at airports whereby passengers will not be required to take out electronic devices from their hand baggage before going through the scanner. Currently, the scanners used at airports provide a two-dimensional view of the

Civil Aviation Security (BCAS) on Wednesday said the regulator has proposed installing scanners based on computer tomography technology at airports that will provide a three-dimensional view of the objects in hand baggage.

objects inside a hand baggage.

Jaideep Prasad, Joint Direc-

tor General of the Bureau of

"With such scanners, passengers will not be required to take out their electronic devices from hand baggage before going through the scanner," he told PTI. Installation of such scanners is also expected to help in speeding up the security

pecially at the airport in the Security Force (CISF) and airport Operators, depending national capital. Authorities have put in place various upon threat perceptions. measures and the congestion

According to the civil aviation ministry, some of the BCAS comes under the civil technologies deployed and proposed for deployment Earlier this month, the at sensitive airports include ministry told the Lok Sabha Computer Tomography Explosive Detection Systems that strengthening of safety and security at airports is (CT-EDS) machines and Dual an ongoing process and re-Generator X-BIS machines.

at Civil Secretariat here.

The meeting was attended by Vice Chancellor SKUAST Jammu, Vice Chancellor SKUAST Kashmir, Secretary in APD, Director General Sericulture J&K, Director General Sheep Husbandry, Kashmir, Director Horticulture Jammu/Kashmir, Director Animal Husbandry Jammu/Kashmir, Director Agriculture Jammu/Kashmir. Director Sheep Husbandry Jammu, Director JKHPM, Director Fisheries J&K, Managing Director,

lile promoting 'Brand JK' for its uniqueness and quality, enabling and empowering farmers for export opportunities as well as diversifying export base of agricultural commodities.

Speaking during the meeting, Dulloo highlighted that Jammu and Kashmir has huge potential for exporting varied agriculture commodities and we must utilise our expertise to frame this Export Promotion Policy as per that potential. He asked the Chairmen and members of JKHPMC, other members of each TWG's to submit product TWG's and senior officers of the specific recommendations for department both in person and export promotion.

Dir Tourism Reviews Winter Preparations At Pahalgam

PAHALGAM: Director, Tourism, Kashmir, Fazlul Haseeb Wednesday visited Pahalgam and reviewed the preparations made by the Department and stakeholders for the winter tourism season particularly the New Year celebrations.

In a series of meetings with associations of local hoteliers and other stakeholders and representatives of line Departments, the Director Tourism Kashmir said that the Department has planned to organize this year's Winter Carnival in a different way to showcase the scenic beauty of Pahalgam and also to promote the destination as a major film shooting destination.

Haseeb said Pahalgam is fast emerging as a major winter tourist destination and the department is committed to put it on the tourist map for winter tourism. He sought details of the preparations from the field functionaries of the Department to make the winter season vibrant at Pahalgam and directed inclusion of more adventure activities to create and sustain the interest of the visitors

Appreciating the hoteliers of Pahalgam for their forthcoming attitude, the Director Tourism sought their suggestions to make the destination more vibrant this year. **ONS**

30th Annual Conference On Sustainable Agri Development Begins

JAMMU: A three day 30th annual conference by Agricultural Economics Research Association (India) on "Institutional Changes for Inclusive and Sustainable Agricultural Development" began on Wednesday at SKUAST, Jammu.

The conference is being organized by the Division of Agricultural Economics and Agribusiness Management, SKUAST-Jammu.

Dr. Mangala Rai, former Secretary DARE and DG ICAR, New Delhi, was the chief guest during the inaugural function.

Addressing on the occasion, Dr. Mangala Rai said that sustainability and inclusive growth in agriculture is the need of the hour. He pointed out that our country is facing technology and policy fatigue which is the prime reason for deceleration in agricultural growth. He strongly advocated addressing the technology fatigue in order to realize the goals of increase in agriculture production. He stressed upon institutional and technological reforms for improving Indian agriculture.

Dr. Ashok Dalwai, CEO, National Rainfed Area Authority (NRAA), Union Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare, emphasized that professionals should come together and exchange knowledge of their respective fields. **ONS**

'Office Leasing Set To Grow 10-15% In FY23, Next Fiscal'

SHORT TAKES

has eased.

aviation ministry.

MUMBAI: In spite of ebbing growth momentum, commercial leasing activity is likely to grow at a healthy 10-15 per cent this fiscal and the next, a report said on Wednesday.

At this growth rate, commercial leasing space will touch 28-30 million sq ft (msf) this fiscal and grow further to 31-33 msf, riding on the improvement in demand as more and more employers are going back to working from office, the report by Crisil said.

It added that even at this rate of growth, demand will be below the pre-pandemic high of 42 msf in fiscal 2020, but within sniffing distance of fiscal 2019 level of 34 msf. This is attributable to growing global recessionary headwinds and slower hiring in technology companies, subduing demand growth.

It also said credit profiles of commercial realtors will continue to be healthy during these two years, backed by adequate leverage.

The report is based on an analysis of players with over Rs 63,000 crore debt and total leasable area of 170 msf.

Grade-A office space has an operational stock of around 670 msf as of March 2022 across the seven major cities of Bengaluru, Chennai, Hyderabad, Kolkata, Mumbai Metropolitan Region, Delhi-NCR, and Pune. PTI

India Looks To Bring 50 **Products Under Quality Control Order**

NEW DELHI: India is looking to bring as many as 50 products such as aluminium, copper items, and household electrical appliances under the quality norms by the second quarter of 2023-24, a move aimed at containing import of the sub-standard goods and boost domestic industry.

According to a communication of the department for promotion of industry and internal trade (DPIIT), it is continuously engaged with BIS (Bureau of Indian Standards) and concerned stakeholders for identification of products for which quality control orders (QCOs) could be issued. The items, under these orders, cannot be produced, sold/traded, imported and stocked unless they bear the BIS mark.

It said that the DPIIT is in the process of formulating QCO for various products.

These orders are issued by the department in consonance with the WTO Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) for industries falling under its domain.

It is our endeavor to issue about 50 QCOs by the second quarter of 2023-24. In this regard, industry, apex industry associations (CII, Assocham), sectoral industry associations, respective administrative ministries, concerned R&D institutions/ organizations are requested to furnish their comments on the 16 draft QCOs, DPIIT said. PTI

Pause In Rate Hike Could **Be Costly Policy Error: Das**

MUMBAI: A premature pause in rate hike at this juncture could be a costly policy error as the battle against inflation is not over. RBI Governor Shaktikanta Das opined while voting for 35 basis-point raise in the key lending rate earlier in the month, said minutes of the MPC meeting released on Wednesday.

Prior to the December hike in repo rate, the RBI had raised the key short-term lending rate by 190 bps in four tranches. The RBI on Wednesday released the minutes of the meeting of the six-member Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) held on December 5-7.

The MPC consists of three external members --- Shashanka Bhide, Ashima Goyal and Jayanth R Varma -- and three RBI officials -- Governor Das, Deputy Governor Michael Debabrata Patra and Executive Director Rajiv Ranjan.

Patra too was of the view that the MPC needs to see a decisive decline in inflation over a series of monthly readings before it shifts stance, which would otherwise be premature.

"Should the incoming information indicate that the recent small easing of inflation is transient rather than the onset of a durable downturn, the MPC should be prepared to respond appropriately in order to achieve the desired inflation objective," the Deputy Governor said while voiting for 35 bps hike in repo to 6.25 per cent along with four other members. PTI

News

KASHMIR OBSERVER SRINAGAR | THURSDAY | 22.12.2022

Loss Of Smell Most Prevalent Symptom Of Long Covid : Study

PRESS TRUST OF INDIA

London: Smell loss is one of the most prevalent symptoms of long Covid, according to a new study. According to the research, it reveals that almost a third of long Covid patients suffer persistent smell loss, with almost a fifth experiencing loss of taste.

from the The team University of East Anglia (UEA), UK, investigated the prevalence of long Covid, and particularly ear, nose and throat related symptoms such as smell loss and parosmia, where people experience strange and often unpleasant smell distortions.

The findings have been published in the journal International Forum of Allergy and Rhinology.

"Long Covid is a complex condition that develops during or after having covid, and it is classified as such when symptoms continue for more than 12 weeks," said lead researcher Carl Philpott, UEA. "Symptoms include head-

ache, myalgia, fatigue and loss of taste and smell. Parosmia can persist for months after initial infection, alongside brain fog and memory loss.

"We wanted to find out more about the prevalence of long Covid, and particularly ear, nose and throat related symptoms such as smell loss and parosmia," said Philpott.

The team looked at results from the UK Coronavirus Infection Survey and analysed information from over 3,60,000 people in March 2022.

A total of 10,431 participants identified as suffering from long Covid, and were asked about the presence of 23 individual symptoms and the impact of the condition on

their day-to-day activities, the

study said. Self-reported long Covid was defined as symptoms persisting for more than four weeks after the first suspected coronavirus infection but not explained by another condition.

"We found that almost three percent of the participants self-identified as having long Covid, and if we scale this up to reflect the UK population, it would equate to around 1.8 million people," said Philpott. "We found that fatigue was

the most common symptom, whilst ENT-related symptoms included a loss of smell and taste, vertigo, shortness of breath. wheezing and a sore throat.

"Almost a third of selfreported long Covid patients were suffering persistent smell loss, and almost a fifth were still experiencing loss of taste.

"This is really significant because we know that loss of smell and taste really impacts people's lives. Our previous research has shown that people who have lost their sense of smell also report high rates of depression, anxiety, isolation and relationship difficulties.

"It can disrupt almost every aspect of life - from everyday concerns about personal hygiene to a loss of sexual inti-macy and the break-down of personal relationships.

"Christmas in particular can be a difficult time. So much of our celebration is based around festive smells and tastes - from the smell of the tree and mulled wine to tasting Christmas dinner, mince pies and chocolates.

"Long Covid is a growing problem in the UK and we need to focus resources on supporting people with loss of smell and taste after Covid infection," said Philpott.

Govt Reviews COVID Situation; Advises People To Mask Up, Get Vaccinated; No Change In International Air Travel Norms Yet

Press Trust of India

New Delhi: In view of a sudden spurt in COVID cases in China and some other countries, the Union health minister on Wednesday reviewed the situation in the country and asked people to follow COVID-appropriate behaviour, including wearing masks in crowded places, and get vaccinated.

"COVID is not over yet. I have directed all concerned to be alert and strengthen surveillance. We are prepared to manage any situation," Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya said.

During the meeting, attended by experts and senior officials, the minister was briefed on the global COVID-19 situation and the domestic scenario, including the preparedness of all stakeholders. Noting that only 27-28 per cent of India's eligible population have taken the precaution dose of COVID-19, NITI Aayog

member (Health) Dr V K Paul, after the meeting, said people should take the jab and also wear masks in crowded places. Paul urged people not to panic and said

that there was no change in the guidelines for international air travel so far. "People should wear masks in crowded

areas. Those with comorbidities and old should especially adhere to this," Paul said. The government will again hold a meeting next week to monitor the situation.

Underlining the challenge posed by the increasing number of COVID-19 cases in some countries across the world such as China, Japan, South Korea, France and the United States, Mandaviya noted the importance of being prepared and remaining alert against new and emerging strains of COVID-19, especially in view of the upcoming festive season.

He directed for strengthening of the surveillance system for whole genome sequencing of positive case samples to track the variants through the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) network to ensure the timely detection of newer variants, if any, circu-

lating in the country. This would facilitate the undertaking of appropriate public health measures. States/UTs have been requested to send samples of all COVID-19 positive



cases to INSACOG Genome Sequencing Laboratories (IGSLs) on a daily basis, for sequencing, to track new variants, if any, a health ministry statement said.

In a presentation, the Minister was briefed that India has been witnessing a steady decline in cases with average daily cases falling to 158 in the week ending December 19, 2022.

However, a consistent rise in global daily average cases has been reported for the last six weeks, with 5.9 lakh daily average cases reported in the week ending December 19, 2022.

A new and highly transmissible BF.7 strain of the Omicron variant is behind a wider surge of COVID infections in China, the statement said.

The Union Health Ministry has al-ready issued "Operational Guidelines for Revised Surveillance Strategy in context of COVID-19" in June 2022 which calls for early detection, isolation, testing and timely management of suspected and confirmed cases to detect and contain outbreaks of new SARS-CoV-2 variants.

Mandaviya directed officials to ensure effective implementation of the same. During the meeting, it was highlight-

ed that Kerala, Karnataka, Maharashtra,

Telangana and Tamil Nadu are the top five states contributing in terms of new Covid cases even though there is a consistent decline in the overall Covid caseload in the country.

These five states accounted for 84 per cent of the daily new cases reported on December 20, 2022.

During the meeting, it was also highlighted that no severity in cases was being seen so far. Secretary Pharma and Ayush were asked to keep stock of medicines that were used during Covid as a precautionary measure. Apart from Paul, the secretaries of

health, department of pharmaceuticals, department of biotechnology, Ayush, Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) Director General Rajiv Bahl, and National Technical Advisory Group on Immunization (NTAGI) Chairman Dr N K Arora were among those who attended the meeting.

In view of the rise in cases in Japan, the United States of America, the Republic of Korea, Brazil and China the Union Health Ministry on Tuesday urged all states and Union territories to ramp up the whole genome sequencing of positive samples of Covid to keep track of emerging variants.

2 Revenue Officials Suspended In Jammu

Srinagar: The district administration Jammu on Wednesday suspended two revenue officials for illegal mutation of Jammu Development Authority (JDA) land in favour of private parties.

The action followed after the JDA brought the issue into the notice of District Administration

"Taking cognizance of the matter and following it up with strict action, one Naib Tehsildar and One Girdawar has been placed under suspension by the District Administration today on 21-12-2022 as it was found that illegal mutation over JDA land had been entered and attested in violation of rules by them" an official spokesperson said.

The suspended officials, he said, have been attached in the office of Sub Divisional Magistrate Akhnoor and Chowki Choura respectively.

Sub Divisional Magistrate, Akhnoor has been appointed as enquiry officer to conduct a detailed enquiry in the matter and furnish report within 15 days.

Chairman NCM Calls On LG

Jammu: Iqbal Singh Lalpura, Chairman, National Commission for Minorities (NCM), Government of India, met Lieutenant Governor Manoj Sinha at the Raj Bhavan here on Wednesday, an official spokesperson said.

The LG and Chairman NCM, he said, discussed important issues with respect to the minority communities of J&K during the meeting.

Man Injured In Blast **Near Firing Range**

Jammu: A man was injured in a blast near the Army's firing practice range in Jammu and Kashmir's Rajouri district on Wednesday, officials said.

Harbansh Singh, a resident of Nonial village of Nowshera sub-division, was reportedly present near the practice range in Garhi when the explosion took place, police said.

He is under treatment at a hospital, they said, adding an investigation has been set in motion.

CONTD. FROM FRONT PAGE

Kashmir Decks Up

of events, including indoor musical performances. Besides, more cuisines have been added to the menu list," he added.

Abdur Rashid Khan, who owns a hotel in Pahalgam, said that the Valley of shepherds is second choice for tourists in winters, first being Gulmarg.

"We had a very good footfall of tourists in spring and summer seasons. However, the tourist arrivals dropped because Pahalgam is too cold in winters," he said.

However, Khan quickly added that the

LG Defends

hardly affect 400 to 500 people. It will have no impact on the poorman, shopkeepers or families.

"It is true that a property worth over Rs 100 crore was taken on lease at Rs 5 under the previous laws. There is a Supreme Court ruling,

"I will honour the Supreme Court and so the whole country and every citizen has to do the same," he said, adding "We came out with the new laws based on the Supreme Court ruling" Sinha also said, "Some people are trying to mislead the public (on the issue)." His remark was an apparent reference to the opposition by almost all regional parties -the National Conference, People's Democratic Party, People's Conference and the April Party -- that have termed the new laws an attempt to settle outsiders in Kashmir following the abrogation of Article 370. On Union Health Minister Mansukh Mandaviya's letter to Congress leader Rahul Gandhi, requesting him to ensure Covid protocols during his ongoing Bharat Jodo Yatra, Sinha said, "We have no intention of stopping anyone's yatra."

Warns Action

investment of over Rs 70,000 crore in coming years and said the figures tabled in the parliament on the subject are being corrected.

His statement on investment came days after PDP president Mehbooba Mufti said the claim made by the government about heavy investment flow into Jammu and Kashmir after the abrogation of Article 370 is a "lie".

"Despite GOIs tall claims of heavy investment flow into J&K post abrogation of Article 370, the figures presented by them in the Parliament prove otherwise. 840 crores in 2017-18 vis-avis 376 crores in 2021-22. A lie has no legs,' Mehbooba Mufti tweeted on Tuesday.

investment at a groundbreaking ceremony. "You be assured and I am saying with full responsibility that over Rs 70,000 crore investment will be made in Jammu and Kashmir in the coming years," Sinha said.

'No Salaries To

Sinha made the remark amid the ongoing protest by migrant Kashmiri Pandit employees and Jammu-based reserved category employees who left the Valley for Jammu in May following the targeted killings of their two colleagues -- Rahul Bhat and Rajni Bhalla. The protesting employees have been seeking relo-

framed a committee to look into their demand. "And I assure them that if there is any chance, we will frame a policy accordingly."

Youth Have Left

Both Wani and Musa were killed in separate encounters with security forces.

The DGP said the people have to become stakeholders of peace to support the police and civil administration.

He said the youth of Tral have set an example by participating in a grand event of unfurling national flags and singing patriotic songs in Tral in August this year as part of the 'Har Ghar Tiranga Campaign' under the 'Azadi Ka Amrit Mahotsav'.

of properties, Sinha said the new laws would

which is now the law in the country.

added.

teliers are optimistic about a good number of tourists visiting Pahalgam to celebrate New Year with their families and friends.

Besides hoteliers, the department of tourism is leaving no stone unturned to make the New Year celebrations memorable for the visiting guests. The department has planned a series of events at the tourist resorts beginning December 25.

"We have organised a winter carnival in Gulmarg on December 25. Events on New Year eve have also been planned at both Gulmarg and Pahalgam tourist resorts." Director Tourism. Fazl-ul-Haseeb told Kashmir Observer.

The carnival, Haseeb said, will have an exhibition of winter games, cuisines, music and dance.

The Tourism Department, the Director said, is also keen on keeping other tourist destinations, including Yousmarg and Doodhpathri open to attract more tourists in this winter season

"With the help of youth service and sports, we are trying to start ski courses in Yousmarg and Doodhpathri. We're also trying to keep Sonamarg open for tourists," he added.

It may be noted, the tourism department organised a two-day houseboat festival along Dal and Nigeen Lakes. The event, according to Haseeb, was organised for vibrant and attractive tourism.

In October this year, the Union Territory administration claimed that 1.62 crore tourists have visited Jammu and Kashmir this year, which is the highest in 75 years of independence

A record-breaking 20.5 lakh tourists, including 3.65 lakh Amarnath yatris, visited Kashmir in the first eight months of this year, drawing visitors from all over the nation to the gorgeous and picturesque Valley, an official spokesperson had said

He had further said that the record number of tourists visiting Jammu and Kashmir underlines the overall development and change that has taken place in the Union territory.

"Tourism is the biggest source of employment in Jammu and Kashmir and since January, 2022 till date, 1.62 crore tourists have visited Jammu and Kashmir, which is the highest in 75 years of independence, the spokesman had said

Waqf Bans

close on the heels of Anjuman Augaf Jamia Masjid in the old city prohibiting men and women from sitting together in the park of the mosque.

The chairperson of the board could not be immediately contacted for a comment.

The yatra is scheduled to enter Jammu and Kashmir next month.

"Many things were stopped during Covid. A decision (to allow or disallow the yatra) will be taken depending on how the situation is next month," Sinha said.

The Lieutenant Governor said there was freedom for political and democratic activities in the Union Territory but not anti-nationalism. "If any activity against the country is going to

take place, it will be stopped," he said.

Asked whether his administration planned to waive Kisan Credit Card loans because of losses suffered by farmers due to the inclement weather, he said the time for waivers had gone.

"Farmers' incomes in Jammu and Kashmir over the past two years have increased manifold. Today, our farmers are placed third in the economy chart after Punjab and Haryana.

"Our farmers will have the highest income in the country in the next five years," he said.

Kashmir Shivers

Jammu and Kashmir till December 24. There is possibility of rains or light snowfall in some parts of Kashmir around Christmas, it said.

'Chilla-i-Kalan' is a 40-day period when a cold wave grips Kashmir and temperatures drop considerably.

There are maximum chances of snowfall during this period and most areas, especially in the higher reaches, receive heavy snowfall.

'Chillai-Kalan' will end on January 30. The cold wave continues even after that in Kashmir with a 20-day 'Chillai-Khurd' (small cold) and a 10-day 'Chillai-Bachha' (baby cold).

Govt Assesses

the COVID drugs and diagnostics are arranged in adequate quantities.

"He directed the HoDs of Health and Medical Education Department to make assessment of their requirements immediately and sent the requisition for procurement to JKMSCL," he

The LG on Wednesday reviewed the administration's preparations for the G20 meeting and "to chalk out our plan to ensure that J&K is showcased in its right perspective."

"We have requested the Central government for another such event for Jammu but the permission is yet to be granted," the Lt governor told reporters here.

After the meeting, attended by senior officers, he said, "I am hopeful that the event will be held like in other parts of the country. We will not lag behind in the preparations and we all together will make an attempt to ensure that J&K is presented before the world in the best way.'

Sinha said his administration solicits maximum public participation and wants that "our institutions and students become part of it. The development which has taken place will be showcased.'

On the terror threat over the event, he said there is nothing to worry as "we have heard a lot about (threats) to the annual Amarnath yatra. But the yatra proved a success and witnessed its highest footfall.

"There is no need to have any concern on the security front. The backbone of those creating problems (terrorists) have already been broken. The meeting will take place in a secure and peaceful atmosphere," he said.

He also downplayed the reported threat given by terror groups to disrupt any move to open two agriculture centres of excellence by Israel in the twin capital cities of Srinagar and Jammu.

"Who will stay in J&K and who will not, which office will open or not is a decision which will be taken by the J&K administration and central government. The interference at the behest of someone else (Pakistan) is not going to happen anymore. Those days are gone," he said.

Replying to a question about action against mainstream leaders allegedly involved with the terror ecosystem, he said such things are not discussed openly.

However, he just said police officers and intelligence agencies are keeping a record of who is part of the terror ecosystem. "Appropriate action will be taken against anyone who is part of the ecosystem, irrespective of his field or profession."

On investments in the UT, he said, "I can name 13 or 14 persons who have invested Rs 100 crore, Rs 200 crore and Rs 900 crore in J&K. When the prime minister visited here he laid the foundation of over Rs 38,000-crore

cation outside Kashmir.

"They are on a strike and I was in constant touch with them and made sincere efforts to address all their long-pending issues. Almost all of them were transferred to district headguarters in consultation with district commissioners, superintendents of police and other government functionaries," the Lt Governor told reporters here.

He, however, said some people are placed at tehsil headquarters, and some in villages close to the city as those posted in the rural development department cannot be transferred to the city.

"Minority employees will not be deployed alone in any office and it was decided that two to three more people will be stationed along with them. We have appointed officers in every district and one in Raj Bhavan to look after their grievances. They are listening to them and are looking for necessary steps to address their issues," he said.

Sinha said all deserving employees have been promoted, fulfilling their long-pending demand.

"The list for promotion from non-gazetted to gazetted posts was forwarded to the Public Service Commission which informed that they were appointed in 2015, while they have already cleared the list of general category employees till 2014 and their list is in pipeline," he said.

Sinha said there is only one genuine issue of concern which is of their accommodation.

"Earlier, there were some issues related to land but it was cleared and tenders floated to complete the project for their accommodation at secured places. As many as 1,200 of them will be provided accommodation by April, and 1,800 more flats will be given during the next financial year," he said.

He said their security is the priority of the administration.

"We have cleared their (protesting employees') salaries till August 31, but it cannot be done that they will be paid their salaries by sitting at their homes. This is a loud and clear message to them and they should listen and understand it," he said.

He said the J & K administration has full sympathy with them and is ready to provide them security or any other assistance.

Referring to the protesting reserved category employees who are also camping in Jammu and demanding their relocation, he said, "They should also keep in mind that they are Kashmir division employees and cannot be transferred to lammu.'

However, he said the chief secretary has

"It is mentioned everywhere that the people Tral today stand for peace and prosperity,' Singh added

Highway Reopens

2 minutes," a traffic department official said. Likewise, vehicular movement from Jammu to Chenani, Patnitop, Doda, Ramban, Gool, Banihal Srinagar and vice-versa had also been suspended.

'Traffic released from both ends on Jammu-Srinagar highway after clearance of debris (single carriageway)." He said subjected to fair weather and road clearance, LMVs passenger and private cars shall be allowed from both sides on Jammu-Srinagar highway viz Jammu towards Srinagar and vice-versa on Wednesday.

Meanwhile, Mughal Road, connecting twin districts of Poonch and Rajouri with Shopian, as well as SSG road, was through for traffic movement, the official added.

BSF Shoots

recovered a packet containing 4.3 kgs of suspected heroin behind the border fence in Bharopal village, a BSF spokesperson said.

Officials said it is suspected that the drug packet was dropped by the drone.

"It (drone) hovered in the sky for a few minutes when counter-drone measures (firing) were taken and later it fell on the other side while returning," he said.

In an another narcotic recovery case from along the same border but not related to drone dropping, the BSF recovered 25 kgs of suspected heroin from a farming field in Fazilka district on Wednesday around 2 am.

The troops got alerted after some activity was noticed on both sides of the India-Pakistan border fence near Gatti Ajaib Singh village of the district.

"BSF troops fired towards Pakistani smugglers ahead of the border fence. However, smugglers managed to run away taking advantage of the dense fog.

"A total of 25 packets suspected to be heroin weighing approximately 25 kg, a PVC pipe and a shawl were recovered," the spokesperson said.

Abducted Samba

and the kidnapper -- Mahendra Nishad of Bilaspur in Chhattisgarh -- arrested, they said. After completing all legal formalities, the girl was reunited with her parents, they said and added that further investigation was underway.

SPORTS

Messi, Mbappé Lead Selections FIFAWORLD CUP FOR AP's Team Of The World Cup

Agencies

DOHA: Lionel Messi and Kylian Mbappé head the selections for the team of the tournament as chosen by writers covering the World Cup for The Associated Press

The team was picked using the 4-3-3 formation preferred by most nations at this World Cup.

Ten of the 11 players reached the semifinals, with in-demand England midfielder Jude Bellingham the exception.

GOALKEEPER: Dominik Livakovic (Croatia)

Livakovic was Croatia's penaltyshootout savior against Japan in the quarterfinals, when he saved three spot kicks, and Brazil in the quarterfinals, when he denied Rodrygo. His performance against Brazil stood out as he thwarted the tournament favorite time and again before Neymar's goal in extra time, and likely put him on the radar of some big clubs in Europe. Livakovic currently plays for Croatian team Dinamo Zagreb. His only mistake was bringing down Julián Álvarez for a penalty converted by Lionel Messi in the 3-0 loss to Argentina in the semifinals.

RIGHT BACK: Achraf Hakimi (Morocco)

Hakimi might have established himself as the best right back in the world with his performances in Qatar, where he mixed solidity in defense with surging runs in Morocco's counterattacks to help with its attack. Despite carrying an injury throughout the tournament, he transferred his club form with Paris Saint-Germain to the World Cup and played every game, even helping to largely neutralize his club teammate and friend Kylian Mbappé in the semifinals. Their embrace at the end of the match was a touching moment. while his "Panenka" penalty to win the shootout against Spain in the round of 16 was audacious.

LEFT BACK: Theo Hernandez (France)

Hernandez started the World Cup as backup at left back to his older brother, Lucas, who sustained a tournament-ending ruptured ACL in his right knee just eight minutes into France's opening game against Australia. Naturally more attacking than his sibling, Theo has filled in impressively and linked up well down the left with Kylian Mbappé, setting up a goal for France's superstar striker against Denmark and also for Adrien Rabiot against Australia. Hernandez also scored the opening goal in the 2-0 win over Morocco and produced solid defensive performances except for a tough night against England winger Bukayo Saka in the quarterfinals.

Kenkre have given a chance to

many players from Mumbai to

play in the I-League. There's a

lot of potential," said the coach.

dip in form, Waddoo had this

Punjab, we got two red cards

when we were in complete

control of the game. Against

Mohammedan Sporting, we

conceded in the second and re-

ceived a red card there as well.

We created a lot of chances, but

could not score. Our focus is

on the game tomorrow against

Kenkre and I hope the boys will

give their best."

Asked about RKFC's recent

"I think against RoundGlass

CENTER BACK: Josko Gvardiol (Croatia)

Gvardiol might be best remembered at the World Cup for being turned inside out by Lionel Messi for Argentina's third goal in the semifinals. Otherwise, he did little wrong, bolstering his reputation as one of the most sought-after center backs in the European game at just age 20. Known as "Little Pep" because of the similarities of his last name with that of Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola, Gvardiol – who wore a face mask at the World Cup after breaking his nose last month - marshalled a Croatia defense that conceded just three goals in five games before coming up against Messi and Co. He also scored in the third-place playoff.

CENTER BACK: Nicolas Otamendi (Argentina)

Otamendi is one of two Argentina players – along with Lionel Messi – to play every minute on the road to the final and one of three outfield players to start every game. The leader of Argentina's rugged defense that has improved throughout the tournament, Otamendi will make his 100th appearance for his country if he plays in the final of what will probably be his last World Cup. A memorable sight was Otamendi collapsing on top of Argentina goal-

keeper Emi Martinez after his lastminute save against Australia in the round of 16.

MIDFIELDER: Sofyan Amrabat (Morocco) Amrabat has been the outstanding defensive midfielder in the tournament, the shield for a Moroccan defense that didn't concede a goal by an opposition player until the semifinals. Not only does he read the game expertly – note his perfectly timed tackle on Kylian Mbappé in the semifinals after chasing back alongside the France striker – but he has sparked his teammates' lethal counterattacks with some timely and precision passing. Fiorentina will do well to hold onto the 26-yearold Amrabat, whose specific skillset is always in demand.

MIDFIELDER: Jude Bellingham (England)

The 19-year-old Bellingham probably has his pick of any club in Europe after his standout performances in England's run to the quarterfinals. The question now is when, rather than if, Borussia Dortmund sells the midfielder, who can do pretty much anything and has an old head on young shoulders. He scored against Iran, was England's best player against Senegal in the round of 16 and drove his team on in its second-half recovery against France in the last eight

MIDFIELDER: Antoine Griezmann (France)

Griezmann, who has been a forward throughout his career, has been reinvented as a midfield playmaker at this World Cup and has been a revelation, likely rivalling Messi and Mbappé as the player of the tournament. He created 11 chances during the group stage, more than any other player, then ran the first half of the quarterfinal match against England before being awarded the player of the match in the win over Morocco in the semifinals. Not only has he demonstrated his creativity with short and long passes, he has also relished the defensive part of the game, which was needed against Morocco in particular.

STRIKER: Kylian Mbappé (France)

Mbappé has been France's most important forward for the second straight World Cup, leading the team to the brink of back-to-back titles at the age of 23. He scored four goals in France's run to the trophy in 2018 and has added five in the lead-up to the final four years later, with his two excellent finishes against Poland in the round of 16 being the highlights. On that trajectory, Miroslav Klose's record of 16 career World Cup goals will surely be threatened by Mbappé if he stays healthy.

STRIKER: Lionel Messi (Argentina)

Messi has been a man on a mission since arriving in Qatar, determined to mark likely his final World Cup with the trophy to complete his resume. He has scored five goals, including in every round in the knockout stage up to the final, and added three assists. Messi has also provided some of the most thrilling moments of individual quality, like his dribbles to set up goals for Nahuel Molina against the Netherlands in the quarterfinals and for Julián Álvarez against Croatia in the semifinals. Messi has become Argentina's all-time top scorer at the World Cup with 11 goals and will make his 26th World Cup appearance – a record – in the final.

STRIKER: Julián Álvarez (Argentina)

Álvarez has come from nowhere to become one of Argentina's most important players, having replaced Lautaro Martinez after his teammate's poor performances in the opening two games. The 22-year-old Manchester City striker has scored four goals in four starts and they have all been different – a curler into the top corner against Poland, a poacher's finish after closing down the goalkeeper against Australia, a run from halfway for his first goal against Croatia and then a close-range tap-in for his second. (AP)

Real Kashmir Play Mumbai Kenkre In I-League Today

to say:

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Real Kashmir FC will take on Mumbai Kenkre FC today, Thursday, December 22, in an I-League 2022-23 match at Cooperage Stadium in Mumbai.

The match will kick off at 4:30 PM.

The Snow Leopards will be looking to get back to winning ways after suffering two consecutive losses, and slipping down to third place in the I-League table.

Real Kashmir head coach Mehrajuddin Wadoo revealed he will be banking on his experience of

India To Go For Kill In 2nd **Test As WTC Battle Heats Up**



Press Trust of India

The upcoming home se- a comeback with the one-off ries against Australia will be Test in England, has consoli-MIRPUR: Stand-in skipper K L decisive in India's bid for a dated his number three position with a 90 and an unusu-

No Decision On Boycotting WC In India: Ramiz To ICC

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) has told the ICC officials that it had threatened to boycott next year's 50-over World Cup in India to exert pressure on the neighbouring country to send its team for the Asia Cup, according to sources.

The hosting rights of the 2023 edition of the 50-over Asia Cup has been awarded to Pakistan by the Asian Cricket Council (ACC) as a pre-cursor to the marquee World Cup in India (October-November 2023).

In October, ACC president and BCCI secretary Jay Shah had said that India will not travel to Pakistan next year for the 50-over Asia Cup -- likely to be held in September 2023 -- after which the PCB had threatened to pull out of the World Cup.

But, it is learnt that the PCB Pakistan since the 2008 Asia chairman Ramiz Raja has told the International Cricket Council officials that the Board has not made any decision not to send its team to India for the 50-over World Cup. The ICC officials, including chief executive officer Geoff Allardice, were in Pakistan as guests to watch the home Test series against England. "Ramiz assured the ICC offi-



cials that PCB had made no decision on not sending its team to India for the World Cup nor was it in favour of boycotting such a mega event but because of the strained cricket relations between the two countries, the PCB had to exert pressure to get the Indian board to send its team for Asia Cup," a source aware of the development told PTI.

According to the source, Ramiz also told the ICC officials that the PCB would not accept the 2025 Champions Trophy being moved from the country on the pretext that India may not travel to Pakistan.

India hasn't travelled to Cup, and after the Mumbai terrorist attack on November



playing in Mumbai to cope with the upcoming challenge.

"I have played for Mumbai FC and Mumbai City FC. I have coached here in Mumbai as well and in my squad, there were many local players with high potential. Now, Mumbai

A victory will take the Srinagar-based team (16 points from 8 matches) level with Sreenidi Deccan FC, who sit second in the table with 19 points from 9. RoundGlass Punjab hold the top spot with 20 points from 9 matches.

J&K Stare At Defeat Against **Gujarat In Ranji Trophy**



Siddharth Desai of Gujarat.

Observer News Service

SRINAGAR: Jammu & Kashmir senior cricket team was bowled out for 135 on Wednesday in the Ranji Trophy match against Gujarat.

Gujarat had made 307 on Day 1 of the test, and on Day 2 wrapped up J&K's first innings in 43.5 overs. Wicketkeeper Fazil Rashid played an excellent knock of $51^{*}(84)$ to rescue [&K from a more embarrassing situation. Left arm spinner Siddharth Desai took 6 wickets to give Gujarat the upper hand. After Gujarat enforced the follow on, J&K ended the day on 83/3. Desai again proved to be the chief wrecker and took all three wickets. Henan Nazir 33* (84) and captain Shubham Pundir 1^* (24) were on the crease at the end of Day 2.

Jammu & Kashmir still trail by 63 runs.

Earlier, Abid Mushtaq took 4 wickets to help restrict Gujarat to 307. Aquib Nabi and Sahil Lotra took 2 wickets each. Fresh from his recent international experience, Umran Malik took 1wicket. For Gujarat, Saurav Chauhan top scored with 73 (100).

come his lean patch as India are expected go for the kill in the second Test against Bangladesh, beginning here on Thursday, to strengthen their position in the World Test Championship.

The race for the top-two spots in the WTC standings has become more interesting with India (55.77 PCT) moving up to the second position following South Africa's (54.55 PCT) heavy loss to Australia (76.92 PCT) in two-day Gabba Test.

second straight WTC final but they also can't afford any slipups against Bangladesh, who showed plenty of fight in the first Test after a poor first innings with the bat.

With regular skipper Rohit Sharma yet to recover from his thumb injury, no changes are expected in the Indian playing eleven. The first Test presented golden opportunity for the likes Shubman Gill and Kuldeep Yadav and they made it count. It would be fair to say that

Cheteshwar Pujara, who made

ally attacking 102 not out in the series-opener.

The stage will also be set for Virat Kohli to score his first Test hundred since November 2019. Skipper Shakib Al Hasan did not bowl in the second innings due to an injury and that is why Bangladesh have added left-arm spinner Nasum Ahmed to the

squad. Nasum is likely to make his Test debut on Thursday. Former captain Mominul

Haque too could get a game. Match starts 9 am IST.

Head Coach Saglain Could Step Down; Babar Might Lose Test Captaincy In July: PCB Sources

Press Trust of India

KARACHI: Pakistan head coach Saglain Mushtag could step down following the team's Test debacle against England at home, with sources also saying that Babar Azam might also announcement was delayed till Wednesday on Raja's inlose his captaincy in the longest format by July next year. A source close to the Paki-

stan Cricket Board (PCB) told PTI on Wednesday that the former off-spinner could leave after the home series against New Zealand, beginning with the Test in Karachi on December 26.

The source said that immediately after the Test ended in Karachi on Tuesday, Babar and Saqlain had flown to Lahore.

'A high-level meeting was held in the office of the PCB chairman Ramiz Raja at the Gaddafi Stadium in which chief selector, Mohammad Wasim also participated," the source said.

He said Babar, Saqlain and Wasim briefed Raja on why Pakistan had lost the Test series 3-0. "Every aspect of the team,

selection matters, the captaincyand Saqlain's role were discussed threadbare in the nearly three-hour-long meetfreely," the source said. ing," the source added.

The source added that Babar He said the chief selector told Raja that right now Pakistan don't have the experience was supposed to announce the squad for the two Tests against and quality players required to New Zealand after the Karachi take on teams like Australia, Test ended on Tuesday, but the England and New Zealand.

Saqlain confirmed to Raja that, as earlier decided, he will leave his head coach's position after the New Zealand series in January and the PCB should start looking for a new coach.

The source also said that the board felt Babar would be better off just captaining the white-ball squads and that the Test captaincy should be given to someone else, preferably Shan Masood or Mohammad Rizwan.

"A lot of discussion has been held on Babar's future as Test captain and it was decided to maintain status quo for now." The source said that a unanimous decision had been taken that it would not be prudent to remove Babar as Test captain between now and July as that the injury issues with the it would demoralise the team and also affect the captain's form.

"But what is decided is that, in July Babar will be changed as Test captain," the source ing England batters to score said.

26 that year, the scheduled bilateral series in early 2009 was cancelled. Pakistan did travel to India

for a short six-match white-ball series in 2012, but in the last 10 years, there hasn't been any bilateral cricket. The two teams have only played each other at various ICC and ACC events.

Messi The Greatest Even Without WC: Guardiola



Reuters

Manchester City manager Pep Guardiola has no doubt that Lionel Messi is the greatest player of all time and his opinion would not change even if the forward had not guided Argentina to the World Cup title in Qatar, the Spaniard said on Wednesday. Messi scored two goals and again in the shootout as he led Argentina to an emotional 4-2 win on penalties over France on Sunday, with the final ending 3-3 after 120 minutes

of breathtaking action. The 35-year-old, who enjoyed a trophy-laden spell under Guardiola during their time at Barcelona, also won the Golden Ball award for the best player with supporters saying his performance had further elevated his status. "Everyone has (an) opinion but nobody can doubt that he's there as the greatest of all time," Guardiola told reporters before Thursday's League Cup fourthround clash against Liverpool.

"For me, he's the best, it's difficult to understand that a player can compete with what he's done. "The people who have seen Pele, Alfredo Di Stefano or Diego Maradona... the opinions are sentimental, but the other side, if he (Messi) wouldn't have won the World Cup, the opinion and my opinion wouldn't change.'

Guardiola said City's 16 players at the tournament would slowly return for club duty. "Today, six players came back. They had an incredible, unique experience. Hopefully they come back and work well and in four years they can have another experience in Canada, Mexico and the United States," Guardiola said.



had given a piece of his mind

to Babar, Saqlain and Wasim

and made it clear that he was

not happy with the selections

three main fast bowlers, Sha-

heen (Afridi), Haris Rauf, and

Naseem Shah, had hit their

plans hard and weakened the

bowling considerably, allow-

'Babar told the chairman

made for the series.

SRINAGAR | THURSDAY | 22.12.2022



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